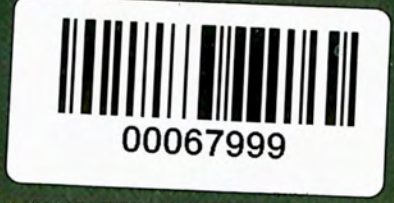

00067999

NOT TO BE ISSUED
OUT OF THE LIBRARY.

BOMBAY BRANCH

OF THE

ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY.

TOWN HALL, BOMBAY.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 02 January, 2016

LECTURES

IN

DIVINITY,

67995
ae

BY THE LATE

GEORGE HILL, D. D.

PRINCIPAL OF ST. MARY'S COLLEGE, ST. ANDREWS.

EDITED FROM HIS MANUSCRIPT,

BY HIS SON,

ALEXANDER HILL, D. D.

MINISTER OF DAILLY.

THIRD EDITION.

VOL. II.

EDINBURGH: WAUGH AND INNES,

AND WHITTAKER, TREACHER & CO., LONDON.

MDCCCXXXIII.

231
H:1/Lee
67999

Edinburgh: Printed by A. Balfour & Co. Niddry Street.

CONTENTS OF VOL. II.

BOOK IV.

OPINIONS CONCERNING THE NATURE, THE EXTENT, AND THE APPLICATION OF THE REMEDY BROUGHT BY THE GOSPEL.

CHAP. I.

Page

DISEASE FOR WHICH THE REMEDY IS PROVIDED, . 2

SECT. 1. Genesis iii.—History of a real transaction, related after the symbolical manner.

2. Effects of Adam's fall upon his posterity—Four systems—Pelagius—Arminius—Human nature corrupted—Sin of Adam imputed—Calvinistic view embraces both corruption and imputation—Adam the representative of the human race—Difficulties.

CHAP. II.

OPINIONS CONCERNING THE NATURE OF THE REMEDY, 33

SECT. 1. Socinians—The Gospel the most effectual lesson of righteousness—Defects of this System.

2. Right acquired by Jesus of saving men from their sins, and giving them immortality—Merits and defects of this system.

3. Catholic system, or that which has been generally held in the Christian church—Atonement or satisfaction of Christ.

CHAP. III.

Page
DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT, 57

SECT. 1. Not irrational—God the righteous Governor of the universe—Honour of his laws to be maintained—Sin the transgression of law—Meaning of Satisfaction—Acceptance of the Lawgiver, and concurrence of the Substitute in the substitution of Christ—Vicarious punishment—Why not practised in human judgments—Power of Christ over his own life—Deep malignity of sin, and exceeding kindness and love of God.

2. Whether there was understood to be a substitution in the heathen sacrifices.

3. Substitution implied in certain sin-offerings in the law of Moses—Day of atonement—Efficacy of the substitution—Nature of the sin-offerings.

4. Three great divisions of the law of Moses—The political and ceremonial law temporary—Ceremonial law emblematical of the Gospel dispensation—Intimated by the prophets—Implied in many passages of the New Testament—Epistle to the Hebrews—Confirmation of the Catholic system from the views of the Apostle Paul—Reasonings of the Socinians.

5. Direct support of the doctrine of the atonement from Scripture—Value annexed to the sufferings of Christ—His sufferings represented as a punishment of sin—Effects ascribed to them—Reconciliation—Redemption—Forgiveness of sins—Justification.

CHAP. IV.

ETERNAL LIFE, 133

Completeness of the Catholic system—Foundation of the hope of eternal life—Merits of Christ—Right to eternal life acquired for us by the death of Christ, confirmed by his life.

CHAP. V.

EXTENT OF THE REMEDY, 148

SECT. 1. First preliminary point—The Gospel designed to be an universal religion—Law of Moses a local dis-

Page

pensation—True character of the Gospel opened by incidental expressions—Unlimited commission given to the Apostles.

2. Second preliminary point—Remedy of the Gospel only for those who repent and believe—Speculations respecting the final condition of the wicked—Subject, beyond the limits of our faculties.

CHAP. VI.

PARTICULAR REDEMPTION, 164

Arguments for Universal and Particular Redemption stated and compared.

CHAP. VII.

PREDESTINATION, 175

Sect. 1. Socinians—Contingent events not subjects of infallible foreknowledge—No predestination of individuals.

2. Arminians—Predestination of individuals dependent on the foreknowledge of their faith and good works, or of their unbelief and impenitence.

3. Calvinists—Entire dependence of the creature on the Creator—Extent of the Divine knowledge—One decree embracing all that is to be, means and end—Supralapsarians—Sublapsarians—Decree of Election absolute—Good pleasure of God—Covenant of Redemption—Merits of Christ a part of the decree of Election—Decree of Reprobation—Extent of the Remedy determined by the Divine decree.

CHAP. VIII.

APPLICATION OF THE REMEDY, 205

Production of the character required for enjoying the blessings of the Gospel—Opinions of the Socinians, Arminians, and Calvinists—Grace—Its nature and efficacy.

CHAP. IX.

Page

ARMINIAN AND CALVINISTIC SYSTEMS COMPARED, 217

SECT. 1. Arminian system satisfying upon a general view—Three difficulties, under which it labours, stated.
2. Objections to the Calvinistic System reducible to two.
3. Calvinistic System not inconsistent with the nature of man as a free moral agent—Definition of liberty—Efficient and final causes—Both embraced by the plan of Providence—Whence the uncertainty in the operation of motives arises—How removed—*Gratia congrua*—Renovation of the mind—Exhibition of such moral inducements as are fitted to call forth its powers.
4. Calvinistic System not inconsistent with the attributes of God—The *ultima ratio* of the inequality in the dispensation of the gifts, both of Nature and of Grace—Decree of reprobation exerts no influence upon men leading them to sin—Objection resolvable into the question concerning the Origin of Evil—Philosophical Answer—Arminians recur to the same Answer—The Glory of God—Moral Evil the object of his abhorrence.

CHAP. X.

SUPPORT WHICH SCRIPTURE GIVES TO THE CALVINISTIC SYSTEM, ... 260

SECT. 1. All the actions of men represented as comprehended in the great plan of Divine Providence.
2. Predestination ascribed in Scripture to the good pleasure of God—System of those who consider the expressions employed, as respecting only the calling of large societies to the knowledge of the Gospel.
3. Representations given in Scripture of the change of character produced by Divine Grace.
4. Objections arising from the commands, the counsels, and the exhortations of Scripture.

CHAP. XI.

HISTORY OF CALVINISM. 283

BOOK V.

INDEX OF PARTICULAR QUESTIONS ARISING OUT OF OPINIONS CONCERNING THE GOSPEL REMEDY, AND OF MANY OF THE TECHNICAL TERMS OF THEOLOGY.

CHAP. I.

Page
REGENERATION—CONVERSION—FAITH, 304

External and Effectual Call—Synergistic System—Fanaticism—Calvinistic View of Conversion—Faith—Different Kinds—Saving Faith.

CHAP. II.

JUSTIFICATION, 316

A Forensic act—Its Nature—Church of Rome—First Reformers—Socinians and Arminians—Calvinists—First and Second Justification—Justification one act of God—Saints under the Old Testament—Other individuals not outwardly called—Perseverance of Saints—Assurance of Grace and Salvation—Reflex act of Faith—Witness of the Spirit.

CHAP. III.

CONNEXION BETWEEN JUSTIFICATION AND SANCTIFICATION, 327

Good works, fruits of Faith—Apparent contradiction between Paul and James—Solifidians—Antinomians—Fratres liberi spiritus—Practical Preaching.

CHAP. IV.

SANCTIFICATION, ... 337

SECT. 1. First part of Sanctification, Repentance—Its Nature—Popish doctrine — Late Repentance — Precise time of Conversion.

Page

2. Second part of Sanctification, a new life—Habit of Righteousness—Immutability of the Moral Law—Christian Casuistry—Counsels of Perfection—Merit of good works—Works of Supererogation.
3. Imperfection of Sanctification—Anabaptists—Mortal and venial sins—Distinction unwarranted—Romans vii.—Christian Morality.

CHAP. V.

COVENANT OF GRACE, . . 359

Scriptural terms—Kingdom of Christ—Union of Christ and his disciples—Adoption—Covenant of Grace.

SECT. 1. Meaning of διαθηκη—Covenant of Works—Sinaitic Covenant—Abrahamic Covenant—New Covenant.
2. Mediator of the New Covenant—Offices of Christ—Mediatores Secundarii of the Church of Rome.
3. Prayer—Encouragements to it in the Covenant of Grace—Nature of Christ's intercession.
4. Sacraments—Explanation of the term—Signs and Seals of the Covenant of Grace—Seven Sacraments of the Church of Rome.

CHAP. VI.

QUESTIONS CONCERNING BAPTISM, . 382

SECT. 1. Prevalence of Washings in the religious ceremonies of all nations—How Baptism is a distinguishing rite of Christianity—Opinions of the Socinians and Quakers—Immersion and sprinkling—Giving a Name.
2. Baptism more than an initiatory rite—Opinions of the Church of Rome, and of the Reformed Churches.
3. Infant Baptism—View of Arguments for it—Godfathers and Godmothers—Confirmation—Admission for the first time to the Lord's Supper.

CHAP. VII.

QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE LORD'S SUPPER, 399

Institution—Correspondence between the Passover and the Lord's Supper—Origin of different opinions respecting it

Page

—System of the Church of Rome—Transubstantiation—Of Luther—Consubstantiation—Ubiquity—Of Zuinglius—A Commemoration—Of Calvin—Spiritual presence of Christ—Time of observing the ordinance.

CHAP. VIII.

CONDITION OF MEN AFTER DEATH, . 471

Happiness of Heaven—Intermediate state—Purgatory—Duration of hell torments.

BOOK VI.

OPINIONS CONCERNING CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

CHAP. I.

FOUNDATION OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT, . 420

Obligation to observe Ordinances.

CHAP. II.

OPINIONS RESPECTING THE PERSONS IN WHOM CHURCH GOVERNMENT IS VESTED, . 424

SECT. 1. Quakers—Deny necessity and lawfulness of a standing Ministry—Consequent disunion and disorder—Their principles repugnant to reason and Scripture.

2. Independents, or Congregational Brethren—Leading principle—Unauthorized by the examples of the New Testament, and contrary to the spirit of its directions—Implies disunion of the Christian Society.

3. Church of Rome—Papists and Roman Catholics—Gallican Church—Catholics of Great Britain—Unity of the Church—Grounds on which the primacy of the Pope is maintained—Matthew xvi. 16.—Scriptural and historical view of the Church of Rome—2 Thess. ii.—Daniel vii.—Rev. xvii.

Page

4. Episcopacy and Presbytery—Principles of the Episcopal form of Government—Of the Presbyterian—Points of agreement and difference—Timothy and Titus—Bishop and Presbyter—Right of Ordination—Succession of Bishops—Presbyterian form of government not a novel invention—Imparity among Bishops, of human institution—Opinions of ancient writers upon the equality of Bishops and Presbyters—First Reformers—Presbyterian parity.

CHAP. III.

NATURE AND EXTENT OF POWER IMPLIED IN CHURCH GOVERNMENT, . . 430

Not created by the State—Erastianism—A spiritual power—Conduct of our Lord and his apostles—Anabaptists—Church of Rome—Excommunication—The Lord Jesus Christ the Head of the Church—Purpose for which he gives power to his Ministers—Its limits.

CHAP. IV.

ARTICLES OF FAITH, . . 518

Scripture the only rule of faith—Articles of faith—Reasons for framing them—History of Confessions of Faith—Subscriptions to them.

CHAP. V.

RITES AND CEREMONIES, . 537

Conditions of Salvation declared in Scripture—What enactments the Church has power to make—Liberty of Conscience—Rule of Peace and Order—Puritans.

CHAP. VI.

DISCIPLINE, . . 557

Judicial power of the Church warranted—System of the Church of Rome—of Protestants.

INDEX, ... 565

LECTURES IN DIVINITY.

BOOK IV.

OPINIONS CONCERNING THE NATURE, THE EXTENT, AND THE APPLICATION OF THE REMEDY BROUGHT BY THE GOSPEL.

HAVING given a view of the different opinions which have been held concerning the two persons, who are revealed in the Gospel, I come now to treat of the remedy which was brought by the one of these persons, and is applied by the other. It appears to me that the best method in which I can state the most important questions in theology upon this great division of the subject, is by leading you to attend to the opinions which have been held concerning the Nature—the Extent—and the Application of the remedy. By considering these three points in succession, we shall exhaust the remaining part of the Socinian, together with the Pelagian and Arminian controversies, and shall thus obtain, without more repetition than is unavoidable upon subjects so closely allied, a complete and connected view of the capital branches of controversial divinity.

CHAP. I.

DISEASE FOR WHICH THE REMEDY IS PROVIDED.

THE Gospel proceeds upon the supposition that all have sinned. It assumes the character of the religion of sinners, and professes to bring a remedy for the moral evil which exists in the world. Our attention is thus called back from the remedy to the disease; for we cannot entertain just apprehensions of the nature of that provision which the Gospel has made, unless we understand the circumstances which called for that provision; and we may expect that those, who have formed different systems with regard to the nature of the remedy, are not of the same opinion with regard to the disease. In one point, however, all sects of Christians agree, that there is much sin in the world. The Socinian does not hesitate to say with the Calvinist, that all have sinned; and those fanatics, who conceived that they themselves had attained the perfection of virtue, were led, by this self-conceit, to magnify the wickedness of the rest of mankind.

That men are sinners is a point concerning which those who respect the authority of Scripture cannot entertain any doubt; for it is uniformly taught there from the period preceding the flood, when, as we read, "God saw that the wickedness of man was great."* At the appearance of Christianity, the angel gave to the Son of Mary the name of Jesus, "for he shall save his people from their sins."† Jesus himself said, "they that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick;"‡ and Paul the apostle of Jesus, in his Epistle to the Romans, builds his whole

* Gen. vi. 5. † Mat. i. 21. ‡ Mat. ix. 12.

doctrine upon the position which he proves in the commencement, "that both Jews and Gentiles are under sin, and that the whole world is guilty before God."* But this position does not rest entirely upon the authority of Scripture. It is abundantly established by the experience of all ages; and they who never received the revelation of the Gospel agree with Christians in acknowledging the fact upon which that revelation proceeds. The violence of human passions, the inefficacy of all the attempts which have been made since the beginning of legislation to restrain them, the secret wickedness which abounds, the horrors of remorse which rack the minds of some, the self-reproach of which those who are less guilty cannot divest themselves, and the dissatisfaction with their own attainments which the most virtuous feel—these circumstances conspire in affording the clearest evidence, that men do not act up to the dictates of right reason, but that the conduct of all falls short, in one degree or other, of that standard which they perceive it to be both their duty and their interest to follow. Men will differ in their opinion of the grossness and the extent of the corruption of manners, according to the opportunities which they have had of observing it—according to the degree of severity in their natural disposition—according to the sentiments and principles which they had imbibed during their education, or which the reflections and habits of advanced life have formed; but no difference in character or situation can render men wholly insensible to this corruption. Even those, who plead upon system for an indulgence to their own defects, meet with numberless instances where they cannot allow others to plead the same indulgence. The vices of one rank are regarded with contempt or with indignation by another; and the easy accommodating moralist, who resolves the vices of the age into the progress of society, looks back with horror upon the enormities of former times. It is true that the forms of wickedness vary according to the state of society; it is also true that some forms are marked with deeper depravity than others; and it will not be denied by any scholar, that a concurrence of favourable circumstances has at some periods gone far to

* Rom. iii. 9.

mitigate the atrocity of crimes, and to invigorate the exertions of virtue. But it is in the writings of the poets, not of the historians of antiquity, that a golden age is to be found. The authentic records of the civil and political transactions of man, from the earliest times, are full of the effects of his wickedness; no date is fixed in these records for the first introduction of sin into the world; and all our information with regard to this most important era in chronology is derived from Scripture.

SECTION I.

It is well known that in the third chapter of the book of Genesis the first act of disobedience is related, and that the history of this act is connected with a command and a threatening, which had been mentioned in the second chapter. This interesting history demands our particular attention when we are beginning to speak of that state of moral evil for which the Gospel brings a remedy; and in order to prepare you for the information which it conveys, it may be proper to mention two extremes, which are to be avoided in the interpretation of this chapter.

1. Several parts of the history cannot be understood in a literal sense. Thus it is not to be supposed that the tree, of which man was forbidden to eat, had the power which the name seems to imply, and which the serpent suggests, of making those who ate the fruit of it wise, knowing good and evil; neither is it to be supposed that the serpent at that time possessed those powers of speech and reason which the narration seems to ascribe to him, or that the plain meaning of these words, "the seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent," expresses the whole punishment of the tempter. Several writers indeed, who are disposed to turn the Scriptures into ridicule, have stated what they call the absurdity or the frivolousness of the literal sense, as a reason for rejecting both the narration and the books in which it is contained. But it has been well answered, that the narration bears upon the face of it the marks of that symbolical style which prevailed

amongst all nations in early times from the poverty of language, and which, even after it has ceased to be necessary, continues to be used, both because it is ancient and because it is expressive. In this symbolical style, the objects of sense are employed to represent the conceptions of the mind; actions or things material to represent things spiritual; and under words which are true when interpreted literally, there is couched some more exalted meaning. To the learned it cannot appear surprising, that the book which claims to be the most ancient should adopt a style which occurs in other early productions; that a transaction, which assumes a date next to that of the creation, and the memory of which had probably been preserved amongst the first men by symbols, should be recorded by the historian of a future age in a language which referred to these symbols; and that circumstances might prevent him from attempting to remove the veil which this symbolical language threw over the transaction.

If the rules for expounding the symbolical style, which have been investigated by the learned, are applied to the narration in the third chapter of Genesis with the same candour with which they are usually applied to every other subject, the difficulties arising from the literal sense of the words will in a great measure vanish. It will readily be admitted, that although the tree did not possess any power of making those who ate the fruit of it wise, it might be called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, because, the prohibition to eat of it being the trial of man's obedience, it was made known to other beings, by means of this tree, whether he was good or evil, and he himself, in eating of it, learnt by sad experience the distinction between good and evil; it will be admitted, that if an intelligent spirit chose for a season to conceal himself under the body of a serpent, the actions of this spirit might, during that time, be ascribed to a serpent; and that if Moses had no commission to explain the rank, the character, and the motives of this spirit, because the state of religious knowledge, which the world then possessed, rendered it inexpedient, for them to receive this communication, he could in no other way record the transaction but by retaining the name of the animal under whose form the spirit had appeared; and, if these things be admitted, it will follow that the

words of the sentence, "it shall bruise thy head," are the most proper words that could have been used upon the occasion, because, while they apply literally to the animal, they admit easily a higher sense, in which they express the punishment of the spirit.

2. But although it be necessary to look beyond the literal sense of the words, in order to perceive the aptness and the significancy of this history, I must warn you against another extreme. Some, with an excess of refinement, have sought to avoid the inconveniences of the literal sense, by considering the third chapter of Genesis as an allegory, not the history of a real transaction, but a moral painting of the violence of appetite, and the gradual introduction of vice in conjunction with the progress of knowledge and the improvements of society. But however true it may be, that vice arises from the prevalence of appetite over reason, and that men in a civilized state know vices of which barbarous times are ignorant, yet there are two reasons, which seem to render it impossible for those who respect the authority of Scripture to admit this as the true interpretation of the third chapter of Genesis. 1. This chapter is part of a continued history. It is inserted between the account of the creation of the first pair and the birth of their two sons; and it explains the reason of their being driven out of that place, which we had been told in the second chapter had been allotted to them by their Creator. Now, not only is it inconsistent with the gravity of an historian, but it detracts in a high degree from the authority of his writings, that in the progress of relating facts so important he should introduce a chapter which, with all the appearance of being a continuation of the history, is only an allegorical representation of the change of manners. 2. The references to this third chapter, which are found in the New Testament, are to us unquestionable vouchers of its being a real history. If you look to 2 Cor. xi. 3, you will perceive that the allusion of the apostle implies his conviction of the fact to which he alludes; and, if you look to 1 Tim. ii. 13, 14, 15, you will find that what was only implied in the former passage is there expressly asserted. The transgression of Adam is introduced as a fact of the same authority and notoriety as his creation. The occasion of the transgression, viz. deceit—the order of the transgression, that the woman, not the man, was

deceived—and one part of the punishment of the transgression, viz. "in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children"—these three important circumstances are mentioned in such a manner by the apostle, that the historical sense of the whole chapter may be considered as having the sanction of his authority.

It appears from these remarks that we are sufficiently warranted by the rules of sound criticism, in adopting that interpretation which lies in the middle between the two extremes; and the middle interpretation is this, to consider the third chapter of Genesis as the history of a real transaction which took place soon after the creation; and as a history related after the symbolical manner common in early times, but exhibiting clearly under this manner the following important facts. Adam and Eve, being tempted by the suggestions of an evil spirit who appeared to them under the form of a serpent, transgressed the commandment of their Creator. In consequence of this transgression, the ground which God had given them was cursed, sorrow became the portion of their life, and they were subjected to death, the sanction which God had annexed to his commandment. Sentence was also pronounced upon the tempter. As he appeared before God in the same shape in which he tempted the woman, the whole of the sentence is applicable to a literal serpent; and the first part of it, Gen. iii. 14, has been generally understood to imply a degradation of the serpent from the figure which he had, and the life which he led before the temptation, to the state in which we see him. But the second part of the sentence, Gen. iii. 15, although applicable to the antipathy with which the human race regards an odious and dangerous animal, admits also of a higher sense; and, whatever it might convey to Adam and Eve, is now understood by us to be significant of that victory which the seed of the woman, *i. e.* a person descended from the woman, was at a future period to gain, through suffering, over the evil spirit, who had assumed the form of a serpent.

This middle interpretation of the third chapter of Genesis, which the rules of sound criticism warrant, is very much confirmed by its being agreeable to the sense of the Jewish Church. Bishop Sherlock, with the ingenuity and ability which distinguish all his writings, has collected the evidence of this point in the third of his discourses upon

prophecy, and in a dissertation annexed to them, entitled, The sense of the ancients before Christ upon the circumstances and consequences of the fall. His account of the history of that transaction is so sound and clear, that I shall give a short specimen of the manner in which he attempts to prove, that what I called the middle interpretation is agreeable to the sense of the Jewish church.

We know that the books of the Apocrypha were written before the days of our Saviour; and in them we find the following expressions, which are clear evidences that the Jews of those days considered the third chapter of Genesis as the history of a real transaction, and at the same time looked beyond the literal sense. Wisd. ii. 23, 24, "For God created man to be immortal, and made him to be an image of his own eternity. Nevertheless, through envy of the devil, came death into the world, and they that do hold of his side do find it." Eccles. xxv. 24, "Of the woman came the beginning of sin, and through her we all die." Dr. Sherlock traces in the book of Job, which we have reason to believe was written before any of the books of Moses, many delicate allusions to the circumstances mentioned in the third chapter of Genesis, sufficient to show that the transaction there recorded was known to the author of this book. The words of Zophar, Job xx. 4, 5, 6, have a good moral meaning according to any interpretation which you can give them. But if you understand by the hypocrite, as the Chaldee paraphrast has done, the tempter or accuser, *i. e.* the spirit who tempted by deceit, and at the same time recollect the views suggested to Eve, and the punishment pronounced upon Adam, you will find that the significancy and energy of the verses are very much improved. The twenty-sixth chapter of Job is a magnificent description of the works of creation, and it concludes with these words, "By his Spirit he hath garnished the heavens, his hand hath formed the crooked serpent." If nothing more is meant than the formation of the animal, it appears strange that an exertion of power so much inferior to all the others should be mentioned after them. But if the crooked serpent is employed to mark the spirit who once assumed that form, this expression forms a fit conclusion of the whole description, because it is the most explicit declaration of the sovereignty of God, in opposition to an opinion which

early prevailed, that there is in nature an evil principle independent of the good. Dr. Sherlock further observes, that in different places of Isaiah and Micah the enemies of God are metaphorically styled Leviathan, the crooked serpent, the dragon; that the Son of God is represented by the Psalmist as treading upon the adder, and his enemies as licking the dust; and that in one of those figurative descriptions of the new heavens and the new earth, *i. e.* the blessed change introduced by the dispensation of the Gospel, which occur often in Isaiah, the concluding words are, "And dust shall be the serpent's meat." Isa. lxv. 25.

It will not appear to any person of taste that some of these allusions are of little avail in this argument, because they are expressed in few words; for it is universally allowed that the shortest incidental reference to an historical fact, by a subsequent writer, may be of such a kind as to afford a decisive proof of his knowledge of that fact; and when we add to these allusions, what Bishop Sherlock's subject did not lead him to mention, the frequent references to this history which are found in the New Testament, it seems to be a matter beyond doubt that he has given a just account of the sense of the ancient Jewish church. Thus Paul says, Rom. v. 12, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin." Satan is styled in the book of Revelation, xii. 9, "the old serpent which deceiveth the whole world;" and, John viii. 44, our Lord calls him a murderer and a liar from the beginning, ανθρωποκτονος απ' αρχης, και ψευστης, two names which most fitly express his having brought death upon the first pair by deceit. John says, 1 John iii. 8, "The devil sinneth from the beginning; for this purpose the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil;" and, Rev. xx. 2, xii. 10, he represents the coming of the kingdom of God, and the power of his Christ, by "that old serpent, the accuser of the brethren, being cast down." Christians are represented as partaking in this triumph; for as Christ, while he was upon earth, gave his disciples power over all the power of the enemy, and made the spirits subject to them, so the apostle, writing to the church of Rome, says, Rom. xvi. 20, "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly;" and the last chapter of the book

of Revelation describes, with the most marked allusion to the third chapter of Genesis, a time when all the effects of his temptation are to disappear. In Genesis, the ground is cursed, and a flaming sword guards the tree of life. In the Revelation, they who enter through the gates into the city, which is there described, are said to have a right to the tree of life; the tree grows in the midst of the street, and on either side of the river; and the leaves of it are for the healing of the nations; and, it is added, there shall be no more curse. The effects of the curse are exhausted with regard to all who enter into the city. Thus the beginning and the end of the Bible lend their authority in support of each other. The transaction recorded in the beginning explains the reason of many expressions which occur in the progress of Scripture; and the description which forms the conclusion reflects light upon the opening. Whatever opinion we may entertain of the third chapter of Genesis when we read it singly, it swells in our conceptions as we advance; and all its meaning and its importance become manifest, when we recognise the features of this early transaction in that magnificent scene by which the mystery of God shall be finished.

SECTION II.

I HAVE judged it necessary to unfold thus fully the principles upon which we interpret the account given in Scripture of the introduction of sin. The event thus interpreted is known by the name of the fall; a word which does not occur in Scripture, but which has probably been borrowed by Christians from Wisdom x. 1, "She preserved the first formed father of the world, that was created alone, and brought him out of his fall." "His fall" is expressive of that change upon his mind, his body, and his outward circumstances, which was the consequence of Adam's transgression.

Wishing to begin with the simplest view of the subject, I have not hitherto spoken of this event in any other light than as if it had been merely personal. But I have now

to engage in those intricate questions that have been agitated concerning the effects which the fall of Adam has produced upon his posterity. The opinions with regard to this matter may be reduced to four; and the order of stating them is dictated by their nature, for they rise above one another in the following gradation.

1. The first opinion is that which was published by Pelagius, a Briton, A. D. 410, which was adopted by Socinus in the sixteenth century, and is held by the modern Socinians. It is admitted, even according to this opinion, that Adam, by eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, transgressed the divine commandment and exposed himself to the displeasure of his Creator. But the consequences of this displeasure are not considered as having impaired the powers of his nature, or as extending to his posterity in such a manner as to do them the smallest hurt. He was a fallible mortal creature by the condition of his being, *i. e.* he was liable to sin from the moment that he was created, and he would have died whether he had sinned or not. He continued, after the action recorded in Genesis, to be such as he was at his creation, and all his posterity are born in similar circumstances. Adam was indeed driven from that paradise which had been assigned as his abode, and by many inconveniences in his situation, was made to feel the effects of his transgression; but these very inconveniences, while they reminded him that he had transgressed, tended to prevent him from going farther astray; the labour with which he had to eat his bread was a salutary discipline, and the recollection of his folly became a lesson of wisdom. The posterity of Adam in like manner are placed in a state of trial; and as their minds are as enlightened and as virtuous as his was, their situation is not more unfavourable. Death to them, as to him, is a natural event, arising from the structure of the body, and indicated by many symptoms; and the shortness of their abode upon earth joins its influence to the common evils of life, in teaching them to apply their hearts to wisdom. If Adam and Eve, by being the first that sinned, had not any examples of vice to entice them, yet neither did they behold any examples of its punishment: whereas if we are in danger of following the vices of those who went before us, yet we may

learn from the history of the world, and from our own observation, to guard against the fatal tendency of the principle of imitation.

The amount then of this opinion is that our first parents, who sinned by eating the forbidden fruit, were not distinguished in any essential respect from those who sin in after ages, and that our condition is not the worse for their sin; that as they were to blame for yielding to a temptation which they might have resisted, so all of us, by a proper attention in cultivating our natural powers, may maintain our innocence amidst the temptations with which we are surrounded; and, therefore, that we fall short of that which it is in our power to do, if we do not yield a more perfect obedience to the law of God than Adam yielded.

There is a simplicity in this system which appears at first sight to recommend it. It seems to be rational and philosophical to say, that human nature is the same now as when it proceeded from the hands of the Creator, and to resolve the changes of character which it has exhibited into the effects of the progress of society. But the fact is, that even the ancient philosophers did not consider this as a satisfying account of many circumstances in the present condition of human nature, and the account falls so very far short of all the views which the Scriptures give upon this subject, and requires such violence to be done to particular passages, that many who are decidedly hostile to the Calvinistic system, finding the Pelagian untenable, have had recourse to a second opinion.

2. The second opinion may be called the Arminian, as deriving its origin from Arminius, a divine of the seventeenth century. It holds the middle place between the Socinian and the Calvinistic systems. It is explained with clearness, and defended with much ability in a Latin treatise by Whitby, the commentator upon the New Testament, entitled *Tractatus de Imputatione Peccati Adami*, from which I take the account of it that I am now to give.

According to this opinion, although the first man had a body naturally frail and mortal, his life would have been for ever preserved by the bounty of his Creator, had he continued obedient; and the instrument employed by God

to preserve his mortal body from decay was the tree of life. Death was declared to be the penalty of transgression; and, therefore, as soon as he transgressed, he was removed at a distance from the tree of life; and his posterity inheriting his natural mortality, and not having access to the tree of life, are subjected to death. It is therefore said by Paul, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, In Adam all die. By one man's offence death reigned by one."* These expressions clearly point out death to be the consequence of Adam's transgression, an evil brought upon his posterity by his fault; and this the Arminians understand to be the whole meaning of its being said, "Adam begat a son in his own likeness, after his image;"† and of Paul's saying, "We have borne the image of the earthly."‡

It is admitted, however, by those who hold the second opinion, that this change upon the condition of mankind, from a life preserved without end to mortality, was most unfavourable to their moral character. The fear of death enfeebles and enslaves the mind; the pursuit of those things which are necessary to support a frail perishing life engrosses and contracts the soul; and the desires of sensual pleasure are rendered more eager and ungovernable, by the knowledge that the time of enjoying them soon passes away. Hence arise envying of those who have a larger share of the good things of this life—strife with those who interfere in our enjoyments—impatience under restraint—and sorrow and repining when pleasure is abridged. And to this variety of turbulent passions, the natural fruits of the punishment of Adam's transgression, there are also to be added, all the fretfulness and disquietude occasioned by the diseases and pains which are inseparable from the condition of a mortal being. In this way the Arminians explain such expressions as these, "by one man's disobedience many were made sinners;" "all are under sin;" "behold I was shapen in iniquity,"§ *i. e.* all men, in consequence of Adam's sin, are born in these circumstances,—under that disposition of events

* Rom. v. 12, 17. 1 Cor. xv. 22. † Gen. v. 3.
‡ 1 Cor. xv. 49. § Rom. v. 19; iii. 9. Psal. li. 5.

which subjects them to the dominion of passion, and exposes them to so many temptations, that it is impossible for any man to maintain his integrity. And hence, they say, arises the necessity of a Saviour, who, restoring to man the immortality which he had forfeited, may be said to have abolished death; who effectually delivers his followers from that bondage of mind, and that corruption of character, which are connected with the fear of death; who, by his perfect obedience, obtains pardon for those sins into which they have been betrayed by their condition; and by his Spirit enables them to overcome the temptations which human nature of itself cannot withstand.

According to this opinion, then, the human race has suffered universally in a very high degree by the sin of their first parent. At the same time, the manner of their suffering is analogous to many circumstances in the ordinary dispensations of Providence; for we often see children, by the negligence or fault of their parents, placed in situations very unfavourable both to their prosperity and to their improvement; and we can trace the profligacy of their character to the defects of their education, to the example set before them in their youth, and to the multiplied temptations in which, from a want of due attention on the part of others, they find themselves early entangled. All this is the same in kind with that account of the effects of Adam's transgression which the Arminians give; so that the second opinion is not attended with any difficulties peculiar to the Christian religion; and did it exhaust the meaning of those passages of Scripture from which our knowledge of that transaction must be derived, we should be delivered from some of the most embarrassing questions in theology. But we must not be afraid of following the truth, because it might be easier to stop short before we arrive at it; and therefore it is necessary for me to state, that this second opinion, however plausible, does not appear to give a complete account of all the circumstances, which both Scripture and experience direct us to take into view, when we speak of the effects which the sin of Adam produced upon his posterity; and that the third opinion implies a great deal more.

3. As the third opinion, which forms the foundation of

what is called the Calvinistic system, is delivered both in the articles of the Church of England, and in the Confession of Faith of the Church of Scotland, I shall give the amount of it in the words of the two churches.

In the sixth chapter of the Confession of Faith it is said, "Our first parents, by their sin, fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and so became dead in sin; the same death in sin, and corrupted nature, are conveyed to all their posterity, descending from them by ordinary generation; and from this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions." In like manner, it is said in the ninth article of the Church of England, "Original sin standeth not in the following or imitation of Adam, (as the Pelagians do vainly talk,) but it is the fault or corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil."

This opinion is supported in all the Calvinistic systems of divinity by nearly the same arguments. But in stating the grounds of it, I shall take as my principal guide, Mr. Edwards, formerly president of the college of New Jersey in America, who has written able treatises upon different branches of the Calvinistic system, and whose defence of the doctrine of original sin contains the fullest and acutest answers that I have seen, to the objections commonly urged against that doctrine.

The fundamental fact, upon which the third opinion rests, is this, that men in all countries and in all varieties of situation are sinners; by which it is not meant that all men are equally bad, or that every man commits every sin; but the meaning is, that the whole history of mankind does not afford an instance of a perfect freedom from sin, either in any body of people, or even in any one individual. Without looking back upon the universal prevalence of idolatry, and the enormities with which it was accompanied in the heathen world, even if we form our opinion of the human race from the appearances which it has exhibited in those lands that have been blessed with revelation, we shall find that a great part transgress the laws of

God in a high degree, and in various respects; that all the means employed to prevent or to correct wickedness prove ineffectual for their amendment; and that in the obedience of the best, there are such defects as constitute them sinners. But the universal prevalence of sin, in all possible circumstances, and under every measure of advantage, is the decisive proof of a natural propensity to sin; for we have no other method by which to judge of tendency or propensity, than by observing the same effect in every change of situation. It is from this kind of observation we say that heavy bodies have a tendency to fall; that animals have certain instincts; that individuals of the human race have characteristical propensities. In like manner, the propensity of the whole race to sin is gathered from the uniformity with which the race has sinned. If the effect arose merely from external circumstances, without any natural propensity, it could not take place so steadily; if the mind had no greater propensity to that which is evil than to that which is good, some circumstances must have occurred, in the infinite variety of events since the beginning of the world, fitted to prevent the appearance of the effect altogether, by exhibiting the human race completely virtuous. But if men have always in one degree or other sinned, there must be something in their nature that indisposes them for their duty, which is the very thing meant by a corruption of nature.

While we thus infer, from the universal practice of sin, that the nature of man is corrupt, we learn from Scripture that this is not the state in which Adam was created. Solomon gives us the result of all his observations, Eccles. vii. 29, "Lo this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions." The solemnity with which the remark is introduced, and the natural significancy of the words, lead us to consider Solomon as speaking of the very great difference between the crooked paths which men now pursue, and the state of uprightness in which the first man was made; and the remark, thus understood, is agreeable to what we may easily gather from laying different passages together. Thus, Gen. i. 31, man was made at the time, when "God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good;" and the formation of this part of the divine work-

manship is expressed in these peculiar words, Gen. i. 27, "So God created man in his own image, κατ' εικονα Θεου, in the image of God created he him." The Socinians indeed interpret this expression as meaning nothing more than dominion; man, they say, the lord of this lower world, is the image of God, the sovereign of the universe. But the words, as they are placed in Genesis, appear to imply something distinct from the dominion given to man, and antecedent to it; and that they really express the character of his mind is manifest from the references made to them in the New Testament, where the character, formed by the Spirit of God in all true Christians, is thus described, "The new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness; which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him."* Any person who has studied the Old and the New Testament together, and who has marked the perfect consistency that runs through the whole language of Scripture, cannot entertain a doubt that Paul, who gives these descriptions, understood by Adam's being created in the image of God, his being created in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness.

But Adam, who, in the day that God created him, was made in the likeness of God, is said, after he had transgressed the commandment of God, to have begotten a son in his own likeness, after his image. Now this image of Adam, which all his posterity bear, is something very different from the image of God in which he was made; and it is not expressive merely of mortality, as the Arminians say, but it marks, as the image of God did, a character of mind. This is manifest from the general strain of Scripture. For the Scriptures not only declare that all have sinned, but they seem to refer the abounding of iniquity to a cause antecedent to education, example, or the operation of particular circumstances; and in numberless places they represent the nature of man as corrupt. Of this kind are the following: "The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." "Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." "The wicked are estranged from the womb, they go astray as soon as they

* Ephes. iv. 24. Colos. iii. 10.

be born, speaking lies." "The heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead."* To these are to be joined from the Old Testament several very striking expressions in the book of Job, a book regarded as at least of equal antiquity with the books of Moses, and of the more weight in this argument, that the personages introduced into it do not discover any acquaintance with the Mosaic dispensation. Of this kind are the following: "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." "What is man that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman that he should be righteous? Behold he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight. How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water."† In the New Testament, the expression of our Lord, John iii. 6, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh;" and the words of his apostle, Rom. vii. 18, "For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing;" and all those pictures of the works of the flesh which abound in the Epistles, appear to afford evidence that, throughout the New Testament, the natural state of every man is represented as a state of depravity and alienation from God.

I have now given a general view of the train of argument which is employed to establish this fact, that human nature is corrupted by the fall of Adam. But after the fact is established, there remain various questions with regard to the manner of the fact, which have been agitated with much heat, and with very little edification.

The church of Rome consider that universal propensity to evil of which we have been speaking, and to which they give the name of *concupiscentia*, as the natural state of man, *i. e.* the state in which he was created. This propensity was, in Adam, under the restraint of that superior divine principle which he derived from communion with God; and in this restraint consisted his uprightness. When the superior principle was, in consequence of his transgression, withdrawn from him and his posterity, the propensity remained. But, being the nature of man, it is not

* Gen. viii. 21. Ps. li. 5; lviii. 3. Eccles. ix. 3.
† Job xiv. 4; xv. 14, 15, 16.

in itself sinful, and becomes sin only when it is carried forth into action; as it is said, James i. 15, "Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin." In answer to this system it has been justly argued, that the disorders of the passions are in themselves strong indications of depravity; that they are opposite to the spiritual and refined morality of the Gospel, which requires purity of heart; that *concupiscentia*, in several places of the New Testament, particularly in the Epistle to the Romans, chap. vii. is spoken of as sin; and that James means that lust, which is sinful while it dwells in the heart, when it hath conceived, brings forth sinful actions. An opinion, diametrically opposite to this system of the church of Rome, was broached in the seventeenth century by Flaccus Illyricus, an obscure divine, that original sin is the very substance of human nature, a being operating and existing in all men. This opinion is justly regarded as monstrous, even by those who hold the corruption of human nature in its greatest extent; and it would not have found a place in this general view of opinions concerning original sin, if the mention of it did not assist you in apprehending the true system of the Calvinists upon this point. They consider the corruption of human nature, not as a substance, but as a defect or perversion of its qualities, by which they are deprived of their original perfection; and applying to this corruption various expressions in which the Apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, describes the state of the heathen world before Christianity appeared, they consider the natural state of man as a state in which the understanding is darkened, the heart alienated from the life of God, the affections set upon earthly things, and all the powers of the mind employed in fulfilling the desires of the flesh. This state is called by the apostle "being dead in trespasses and sins;" an expression which, when taken in conjunction with the threatening to Adam, "in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," has suggested what divines call spiritual death. This denotes an estrangement from God, the fountain of life, and an inability in man to return to God; and being considered as extending from Adam through his posterity, it is, in the highest sense, the corruption of the nature of a creature, who was made after the image of God.

This account of the corruption of human nature does not imply that man has lost the natural capacity of knowing God, or the natural sense of the distinction between right and wrong. The same powers of reason by which he conducts the business of life, or makes discoveries in science, lead him to infer, from the works of creation, the existence and the perfections of the Deity; and those moral sentiments, upon which all the intercourse of society and the principles of legislation proceed, dictate to him that conduct which, as an individual, he ought to observe. Accordingly, the apostle to the Romans, at the very time he is proving the universal corruption of human nature, says that heathen idolatry was inexcusable, because the invisible things of God may be understood by the things which he hath made; and further, that the Gentiles, who have not the law, *i. e.* any written law, are a law unto themselves.* Man, therefore, is not, according to the third opinion, so far degraded by the corruption of his nature as to cease to be a moral agent. In every situation he appears capable of the sentiment of religion; in every country, and under every form of society, his heart has glowed with the feelings of private affection and tenderness; and the history of his exploits has been ennobled by many disinterested and heroic exertions. But, without any invidious detraction from those amiable dispositions and those splendid actions, which constitute the principal charm of the ancient poets and historians, it will occur to you that they were either wholly unconnected with principles of religion, or that they were accompanied with superstition so gross and childish, as not in reality to contradict that system, which places the corruption of human nature in an estrangement from the true God. Amidst all the offices of private kindness or of public spirit which we have been accustomed to admire, men were without God in the world; and there does not appear, from the full experiment which was made under the philosophy and government of ancient times, the smallest probability that any improvement of the understanding which they could produce, or any refinement of the heart which they could form, would have recovered man from what is termed the spiritual death of

* Rom. i. ii.

the soul, so as to bring him back to the fountain of life, and restore that communion with God, and that image of God, which are essential to the rectitude of his nature.

After ascertaining what is meant, according to the third opinion, by the corruption of human nature, it has been inquired in what manner this corruption is transmitted, how it comes about that the powers of our nature inherit from Adam this defect and perversion. But this is an inquiry in which it is impossible to attain any satisfying conclusion, because it resolves into principles of which we are totally ignorant. We infer, from various appearances, that besides the body which is obvious to our senses, and the growth of which may be traced from the time of its conception, every human being has a principle distinct from matter, which we call the soul. But we know not enough of the nature of the soul to form any judgment with regard to the manner of its connexion with the body, or the kind of influence which the one exerts over the other. If we say with some sects of Christians *animam esse ex tradice*, that the soul is generated like the body by the act of the parents, we seem to approach to materialism. If we say, as the Calvinists generally do, that souls are successively made by the Creator, and joined by his act to those bodies which they are to animate, we seem to form a rational hypothesis. But having never been admitted to these secret councils of the Father of Spirits, we find this act of his in many points to us inexplicable. Here are two substances, not only of a different nature, but according to this hypothesis of a different origin, most intimately joined. We feel daily the effects of their junction. Yet we cannot pretend to assign the period when it commenced, the reasons which determined the Creator to join a soul to one body rather than to another, or the bond which keeps together that soul and body which he chose to unite. These are questions which reason does not resolve, and upon which revelation does not profess to throw any light. They meet us upon many subjects in natural religion, and they recur when we attempt to speculate concerning the manner in which the corruption of human nature is transmitted. But in revelation, as in natural religion, they are questions concerning the manner of the fact, not concerning the fact itself; and, therefore, if the Scriptures reveal,

or if experience assures us, that this corruption is transmitted, the questions which may be started, and which cannot be answered, are of no more weight to shake the evidence of this fact, than questions of the same kind are to shake the evidence of the union of soul and body. We cannot doubt, from our acquaintance with the government of God, that if the Creator infuses a soul into a body, either at the time of the conception of the body, or at any subsequent period, he acts according to a general course which is established with wisdom; and it appears from our experience to be part of this course, that the likeness of children to their parents extends beyond the features of their body. There are not only constitutional diseases, but constitutional vices; there is a character which often runs through a family for many generations; and there are numberless instances where the resemblance cannot be explained by imitation. The same Scriptures, from which we infer that a general corruption pervades the posterity of Adam, intimate that it is transmitted by natural generation, that is to say, that the constitution of which we observe many particular instances extends to this universal fact. But they leave the transmission of this corruption upon the same footing, and in the same darkness, with the propagation of the soul; and their silence is sufficient to check the speculations of every sober inquirer.

This third opinion concerning the effects of the sin of Adam is supported by many passages in Scripture; it appears to have been the received opinion of the Jewish church: and some traditions of it having probably reached the heathen philosophers, and coming in aid of the conclusions that might be drawn from universal experience, may have led Socrates to speak of κακον εμφυτον, a phrase equivalent to what we call natural corruption; and Plato to ascribe the causes of our vices to those first principles which we inherit from our parents.

But there yet remains a fourth opinion upon this subject.

4. It is held by many divines, it is part of the creed of the church of Scotland, and it seems to be implied in the language of the articles of the church of England, although it is not there directly expressed, that the sin of Adam is imputed to his posterity; and that by means of this impu-

tation, all who are descended from him are guilty before God. The opinion of those who hold the imputation of the sin of Adam includes the truth of the third opinion; but they hold something more; and you will understand in what respect the fourth opinion goes beyond the third, by attending to the meaning of two terms which are of frequent use amongst those who write upon original sin, the mediate and immediate imputation of the sin of Adam. The corruption which we derive from Adam has been styled the mediate imputation of his sin; it becomes ours only in consequence of our connexion with him, but it is truly ours because it infects our nature. Now those who hold the fourth opinion say, that besides this corruption of nature, although always in conjunction with it, there is an immediate imputation, by which the sin of Adam is counted in the sight of God as ours. Accordingly you will find the third and fourth opinion joined in the sixth chapter of our Confession of Faith, as forming together the complete view of the effects of Adam's sin. "They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity, descending from them by ordinary generation."

The reasoning upon which this fourth opinion has been grounded is of the following kind. In those transactions which took place soon after the creation, Adam appears as the representative of the human race. The first blessing, "be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it," both by the terms in which it is conceived, and by the nature of the thing, was not a personal blessing, but, although addressed to Adam and Eve, conveyed to their posterity, as well as to themselves, a right to occupy the earth, to rule over the inferior animals, and to employ their service. Had the penalty annexed to disobedience, "in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," been executed as instantly as the words might have led Adam to expect, he could not have had any posterity. It was the delaying the execution of this part of the sentence which left time for the appearance of the human race upon earth; but in consequence of the sin of their first parents they come into the world subject to death; and the calamities in their persons, which mankind continually

experience, are the daily execution of the former parts of the sentence pronounced upon Adam. The ground is cursed to them for his sake; and even if we admit the ingenious theory which Bishop Sherlock has ably supported, that part of the curse upon the ground was remitted by the blessing pronounced upon Noah after the flood, we must acknowledge that the full extent of that curse had been felt by all the inhabitants of the earth for many generations. Here then are unquestionably the effects of the sin of Adam reaching to his posterity; in other words, it is counted to them in the judgment of God as if it were their own; so that Adam in this sin, as well as in the other transactions between the Creator and our first parents, appears not as an individual, but as being what divines call a federal head, who, in the covenant that was made with him, acted for his posterity.

These views, suggested by the consequences of the transactions before the fall, are considered as implied in an expression, Ephes. ii. 3, φυσει τεκνα οργης; and they are very much confirmed by the reasoning of the Apostle Paul, in the Epistle to the Romans, chap. v. The apostle had proved largely, in the beginning of that epistle, the universal sinfulness of mankind. From thence he had proceeded to discourse of the richness of that grace by which sinners are justified, *i. e.* brought into a state of favour and reconciliation; and in reference to what he had said of the manner of this justification, he thus expresses himself, Rom. v. 11, "we joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the atonement." At this point he looks back upon the two subjects which he had discussed, and, with the comprehension and rapidity of thought which distinguish the writings of Paul, he brings forward to the view of the Romans a striking similarity between the two subjects. The similarity is this, that both sin, and the remedy of sin, were introduced through one man. By Jesus we have received the atonement: by one man sin entered into the world. This similarity in two things diametrically opposite was of itself worthy of attention. But the apostle had a particular reason for bringing it forward and dwelling upon it, which we may gather from the preceding part of the epistle. The great distinction of mankind in those times was into

Jew and Gentile. Accordingly, the apostle, when he was proving the sinfulness of mankind, found it necessary to show that the Jews in this respect had no advantage above the Gentiles, and rendered his proposition, in the apprehension of those to whom he wrote, completely universal, by concluding both Jews and Gentiles under sin. But there could not be a more effectual way of confirming the universality of this his fundamental proposition, than by recurring to the similarity which he is now going to state. For, in stating this similarity, he draws the attention of his readers from Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation, of whom they boasted, and through whom they inherited many blessings, to a more remote ancestor, from whom both Jews and Gentiles were descended, and through whom both inherited the same dismal legacy. In ascending to Adam the distinction between Jews and Gentiles is lost, and the necessity of a Saviour is laid in that condition which is common to all mankind.

This account of the occasion of introducing the discourse, which we are about to consider, explains the meaning of the two words *δια τουτο*, with which the twelfth verse begins. *Δια τουτο ὡσπερ δι' ἑνος ανθρωπου ἡ ἁμαρτια εις τον κοσμον εισηλθε, και δια της ἁμαρτιας ὁ θανατος, και οὑτως εις παντας ανθρωπους ὁ θανατος διηλθεν, εφ' ᾧ παντες ἡμαρτον.* *Τουτο* does not refer to any particular word in the preceding verse, but to the whole of what the apostle had said in the former part of the epistle. "This being the view which I have given of the sinfulness of mankind and of their deliverance, you will perceive that similarity between the two which I am now to state." *Ὡσπερ* gives notice that the similarity is to be stated; but the reddition of it, or the other subject similar to that mentioned in the twelfth verse, is not formally enunciated till the eighteenth. The intervening verses, after the manner of Paul, are filled up with illustrations of the first subject, or with the mention of points of dissimilitude between the two, before the point in which they are similar is clearly expressed. The first three clauses of the twelfth verse have already occurred in speaking of the effects of Adam's sin, and they are not attended with any peculiar difficulty. But the last clause of this verse, *εφ' ᾧ παντες ἡμαρτον*, admits of three different interpretations, and

the nature of its connexion with the rest of the verse appears to vary according to the interpretation which is adopted. It has been rendered, "in whom, viz. the first man, all sinned"—"unto which, viz. death, all sinned"—"inasmuch as, viz. for this which is, all sinned." The first does not really express more than may be gathered from the apostle's argument, and therefore the sense is no reason for rejecting it. But it will occur to you, that according to this interpretation the antecedent, ανθρωπου, is very remote, and that several masculine words have intervened. The second refers the relative to the nearest antecedent θανατος, and marks truly the effect or consequence of sin, but it marks that effect by an expression harsh and obscure. The third renders εφ' ῳ in a manner agreeable to the analogy of the Greek language, and the use of this phrase in classical writers. But it would have been more accurate to have rendered ἡμαρτον, "did sin," than "have sinned;" and if our translation be read with this small correction, "forasmuch as, or upon this account which is, all did sin," the last clause of the twelfth verse, in which the apostle is still stating the first subject, will appear to be perfectly equivalent to the first clause of the nineteenth verse, where the same subject is repeated. "All were constituted sinners by the act of this one man." The reason of this assertion is given in the thirteenth verse. "For before the law of Moses was given, sin was in the world." I need not refer to the book of Genesis for the sins of that period, which are there related: for none will be disposed to deny that sin was in the world, *i. e.* was universally practised before the children of Israel went out of Egypt: and yet whatever the actions of men in that period had been, they could not have been counted to them as sins, had there been no law; since, according to an axiom often repeated by the apostle, "where no law is, there is no transgression." But the apostle had clearly proved, in the first and second chapters of the epistle, that men never were left without a law, because "the invisible things of God, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made," and "the nations who have not the law, are a law unto themselves." There is a primary universal rule of righteousness written on the heart of man, under which every man is born, by which

every man, although he has no other revelation of the divine will, knows that he shall be judged, and every transgression of which is felt to be worthy of death. Had there been no such law, sin could not have been attended with its penal consequence, *i. e.* death.

The word αλλα, in the fourteenth verse, gives notice of an objection which the apostle is aware might occur to his doctrine in the thirteenth, but which he purposely brings forward, because it is the strongest confirmation of his capital position, that sin and death entered into the world by one man. The objection is, that sin appeared by its penal effect, death, in the interval between Adam and Moses, even over those who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression. It is not obvious who are the persons here meant, and different interpretations have been given. It appears plain to me, that the apostle cannot mean, as some say, those who had not sinned like Adam, with the punishment of death before their eyes; because the apostle had expressly said, Rom. i. 32, "That the heathen, who were filled with all unrighteousness, knew the judgment of God, that they who commit such things are worthy of death." Besides, it is not pertinent to his argument to say here, that any who sinned, in the interval between Adam and Moses, sinned without knowing, as Adam did, that death is the punishment of sin. For his argument is this; sin cannot be counted to a person, so as to be punished in him, without a law: but sin was punished before the law of Moses existed; the consequence is, that there must be some law antecedent to the law of Moses, and more universal, viz. the law of works given to the first parent of mankind, and extending to all his posterity. Every one that commits sin, therefore, sins after the similitude of Adam's transgression, in this respect, that he sins against the law of his Creator, knowing that he deserves death. But who then are they that have not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, and yet death reigns over them? They can be none other than infants, the persons of whom this clause is generally understood; that large proportion of the human race who die before their faculties are so far unfolded that they are capable of committing any sin. They die in consequence of the law

given to their first parent,, by which death is declared to be the punishment of sin, and their dying is a proof that his sin is counted to them as theirs. The mention of this striking fact leads the apostle to style Adam τυπος του μελλοντος, an image or representation of him that was to come, of Christ, the person by whom the deliverance was to be brought. But he does not formally state the similarity between the two, until he has touched upon the points of dissimilitude. These are stated in the 15th, 16th, and 17th verses; and the amount of them is this: the value of the gift transcends the extent of the forfeiture, and the grace manifested in the gift goes far beyond every appearance of severity in the condemnation. I will not arrest your attention upon these points of dissimilitude now, because they will occur more properly when we come to speak of the remedy. From the mention of them, the apostle passes on to state explicitly, in verses 18, 19, the similarity between the method in which sin and death were introduced into the world, and the method of our deliverance. The particles αρα ουν give notice that he is continuing his discourse, and that he is collecting the former parts of it in approaching to his conclusion. The similarity is this. As by one offence all men are under the condemnation of death, as by the disobedience of one man many were constituted in the sight of God sinners, so by one righteousness, all men obtain the justification of life, and by the obedience of one many shall be constituted in the sight of God righteous. The offence of one is counted to us in such a manner, that we suffer the punishment of sin, which a just God would not inflict upon us if we were not considered by him as sinners; the obedience of one is counted to us in such a manner, that we who were sinners are upon account of it justified, *i. e.* considered as righteous by a just God, and received into his favour.

This whole reasoning of the apostle favours the notion of an imputation of Adam's sin. The phrase indeed does not occur; but the thing meant by the phrase appears to be the natural meaning of the passage; and I know no better way in which you can satisfy yourselves that it is the true meaning, than by comparing the interpretation now given with the forced paraphrases to which those are

obliged to have recourse who wish to show that the fourth opinion does not receive any countenance from the authority of Paul.

Upon these two grounds, our daily experience that the effects of Adam's sin yet subsist in the world, and the manner in which the apostle reasons from this fact, that all die, there has been founded that notion which, from the religious education commonly received in this country, is familiar to your minds, that there was at the beginning of the world a covenant in which Adam acted as the representative of his posterity. It is generally said, in support of this notion, that Adam had every possible advantage for keeping the covenant, and no reasonable temptation to break it, so that human virtue could not have had a fairer trial; that human affairs could not proceed unless parents acted for their children, and rulers for their subjects; and that we are accustomed to behold not only many instances in which individuals suffer for the faults of those who went before them, but also many kinds of civil contracts, that include posterity in transactions, which, although they had no opportunity of giving their consent to them, are considered, in the eye of the law, as theirs. It is further said, that our usages and ideas with regard to such transactions occur often in the Old Testament, where the Almighty condescends to represent that act of sovereignty, by which he chose the posterity of Abraham, as a covenant made with their ancestor, and the law given by Moses as a covenant made with the Israelites in the wilderness, not for themselves only, but for their posterity;* a covenant which both conveyed blessings to the descendants of those with whom it was made, and also laid them under many restraints; and a covenant constituted in this manner, that succeeding generations endured many calamities, and the Jews at this day are continuing to suffer for the sins of their fathers.

It is true indeed that we are not warranted to consider this part of the constitution of that covenant which was made with the Israelites, as in all respects a specimen of the general plan of the divine administration, because this constitution extended only to the temporal affairs of the

* Deut. xxix. 10—15.

Jewish nation. And yet when we are told by that apostle, from whose writings our knowledge of the new dispensation is chiefly derived, that those who have committed no sin suffer death, which entered into the world by the sin of the first Adam, it is impossible for us to avoid concluding, that as there was a particular constitution for the Jewish state, in which the iniquities of the fathers were visited upon the children, there may be an universal constitution for the human race, by which the sin of their first parent extends to all his offspring.

It is readily admitted that difficulties appear to us to attend this constitution. But difficulties of the same kind are perpetually occurring upon subjects in theology, not peculiar to this system, but nearly the same, in whatever manner we attempt to account for the origin of evil: and the same account may be given of all of them. We see only in part; but we are not qualified to judge of the ways of God without seeing the whole, because his administration embraces the whole. There may be a depth of wisdom in the constitution of which we are now speaking, that we are unable to penetrate: there may be advantages resulting from it to the human race that infinitely counterbalance the evils to which it gives occasion. That it is not unbecoming the Ruler of the universe, appears with the clearest evidence from hence, that a constitution of the same kind, with regard to some particulars, may be observed in the ordinary course of his providence towards all men, and in the whole history of that people, of whom he condescended to appear as the immediate Governor.

Although it may appear to you from what has been said, that we are warranted to employ the notion of a covenant, when we speak of the manner in which the sin of Adam is imputed to his posterity, it is proper to warn you that there is a danger of falling into very great improprieties both in language and in sentiment, by pushing the analogy too far, and that you must not be surprised if all the explications of this subject appear to you unsatisfactory. When you read that Adam is the root, and that, as in the communication of the juices of a tree, the guilt is necessarily conveyed from the root to all the branches;—that Adam and his posterity constitute one moral person;—that the whole human race was, at the beginning, one

mass acting by its head;—and that all the individuals of that mass consented to its act, because they were in him, from whom they afterwards proceeded,—you will probably feel, as I did, that they are repugnant to that distinct agency, which enters into our notion of accountable beings, as essential to that character. But you will remember that those who say such things attempt to explain what they do not understand; and you will learn, by their failure, that it is wiser to refrain from such attempts, and to rest in what the Scriptures teach with regard to the imputation of Adam's sin, which may be summed up in a few words. The effects of the sin of Adam reach to his posterity in such a manner that they suffer death, which is declared in Scripture to be the wages of sin, as if his sin had been committed by them. The Scriptures, in stating the effects of Adam's sin, make no distinction between that death which his posterity visibly suffer, and that eternal destruction which is often called by the name of death; and therefore we are not warranted to say that the dissolution of soul and body is the only effect of Adam's sin, which extends to his posterity. In what manner the mercy of God will dispose hereafter of those infants who die in consequence of Adam's sin, without having done any evil, the Scriptures have not declared; and it does not become us to say more than is said in the excellent words of our Confession of Faith: "Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who worketh when, and where, and how he pleaseth."* With regard to those that are grown up, the corruption of nature inherited from Adam, in consequence of which they daily commit sins of their own, is joined with the imputation of his sin; and when we think of their situation, we ought not to allow ourselves, even in imagination, to separate the two.

The amount of all that has been said concerning that situation for which the Gospel brings a remedy is this. Those, who consider the Scriptures as declaring that the whole human race are both guilty and depraved before God, perceive in this picture the absolute necessity of a remedy. But even those, who do not admit the truth of

* Confession of Faith, x. 3.

this picture, acknowledge without hesitation that men are sinners. They differ in opinion from the former with regard to the malignity of sin, the manner in which it was introduced into the world, and the nature of that constitution under which the guilt and misery of it are transmitted; and hence they entertain different apprehensions with regard to the nature and extent of the remedy, and the manner in which it is applied to the soul. But as the words of the apostle, "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," are subscribed by every Christian, the fundamental proposition upon which the Gospel rests is universally assented to: and from this proposition we now proceed to examine the different opinions concerning this remedy.

CHAP. II.

OPINIONS CONCERNING THE NATURE OF THE REMEDY.

As Christians of all denominations admit that men have sinned, they admit also that the Gospel is a remedy for the present state of moral evil. They readily adopt that "faithful saying," which the apostle Paul declares to be "worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." They adore the love of the Father in sending the Son upon this errand. They profess the warmest gratitude to him "who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity." They acknowledge that the greatest benefits are derived to the world by his sufferings; that we "have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins;" and that by what he did and underwent for our sakes, he is entitled to be honoured as the Saviour, the Deliverer, and the Redeemer of mankind.

But under this uniformity in the language which all who receive the Scriptures are constrained to use, there is concealed much diversity of opinion; and the nature of that remedy, which it is the character of the Gospel to have brought, is one of the subjects in their speculations upon which Christians have departed very far from one another. The opposite systems are supported partly by general reasonings, and partly by passages of Scripture. The general reasonings are by no means of equal weight upon all sides. But it is possible for able men to reason so plausibly in support of any of the opinions which have been held upon this subject, that the mind might remain in suspense, if the general language of Scripture, when

fairly interpreted, did not appear decidedly to favour one of the systems: so that the question concerning the nature of the remedy, like those which we lately discussed concerning the character and dignity of the persons revealed in the Gospel, must be ultimately determined by sound Scripture criticism.

There are three systems with regard to the nature of the remedy, to which we may be able afterwards to affix more significant names from the leading features by which they are distinguished, but which it may suffice at present to mark by calling them the Socinian, the Middle, and the Catholic opinions. By calling the first the Socinian, I do not mean that it was held by Socinus himself, for his opinion went a great deal farther; but it is the opinion held by those who now call themselves Socinians, and it is the simplest system that can be formed with regard to the nature of the remedy. I call the third the Catholic opinion, because it has been generally held in the Christian church since the days of the apostles, and enters into the creed of almost every established church in Christendom. What I call the Middle opinion arose in the course of the last century out of a part of the system of Socinus. It is disavowed by the modern Socinians; but it has been brought forward by some very able divines both in the church of England, and amongst the dissenters, as the best method of steering clear of the objections that have been made either to the Socinian or to the Catholic system.

I think it of importance to give a fair and complete exhibition of every one of these three systems; and the order of stating them, which appears to be dictated by their nature, is to begin with the Socinian, which is the simplest; to proceed to the middle, which professes to be an improvement upon the Socinian; and to end with the Catholic, which, if it is the truth, will bear the disadvantage arising from the previous exhibition of two systems that are founded upon objections to it, and will approve itself to the understanding to be agreeable both to reason and to Scripture.

SECTION I.

THE fundamental principle of the Socinian system is this. Pure goodness, or a desire to communicate happiness, is conceived by the Socinians to constitute the whole character of the Deity. All the moral attributes of the divine nature are regarded as only modifications of benevolence, and it is believed that nothing either exists in God, or forms a part of his government, which may not be resolved into this principle. Infinitely blessed in himself, he could have no reason for creating the human race but to make them happy. His wisdom discerns the best means of communicating happiness; his power carries these means readily and certainly into effect; and although the means vary according to circumstances, the benevolent purpose from which they proceed is always the same. He hates sin, because it makes his creatures unhappy; he forbids it, that his authority may deter them from doing what is hurtful to themselves; he punishes it, that the experience of suffering may convince them of their error. He employs various means for their reformation; he bears patiently with their obstinacy and heedlessness; and at what time soever the recollection of his prohibition, the suffering of evil, or any other circumstance, brings back to their duty those who have sinned, that goodness of the Deity, which had been exercised under the form of long-suffering during their error, becomes compassion and clemency; he receives his returning children into his favour; and without regard to any external circumstance, or any other being, freely forgives their sins. The supreme ruler of the universe, say the Socinians, in thus freely forgiving all sins merely upon the repentance of the sinner, does injury to none. He only remits a part of his own right, a debt which his offending creatures have contracted to him. The independent felicity of his nature suffers no diminution from his not exacting all that he might claim; the glory of his goodness is illustrated by the happiness which the pardon conveys to the penitent; and in conferring this pardon freely without any consideration foreign to himself, he sets his creatures an example of generosity in forgiving those

offences which they are daily receiving from one another.

This fundamental principle of the Socinian opinion, which seems at first sight to flow from the infinite perfection of the divine nature, and to be most honourable to the Creator and Father of all, is supported by numberless passages of Scripture, which magnify the free grace of God in the pardon of transgressors, which invite them to return, which describe the readiness with which they shall be received, and the joy that there is in heaven over a sinner that repenteth. It is supported by the many instances in which we experience the forbearance of God, that long-suffering which spares us amidst repeated provocations, and leads us by unmerited blessings to repentance. It is supported by all those candid and indulgent sentiments, which dispose us to forget the offences of persons in whom we discover a change of mind, and particularly by parental affection, which, instead of being worn out by the waywardness and perverseness of children, is impatient to embrace them on the first symptoms of a return to obedience. It can easily be conceived that the arguments, of which I have given a short sketch, are capable of receiving much embellishment, and that eloquent men, by fixing the attention upon a particular view of the subject, may leave little doubt in the minds of ordinary readers, that a theory concerning the nature of the remedy offered in the Gospel, resting upon this principle as its basis, contains the whole of the truth.

When this principle is applied in forming such a theory, it follows obviously from the principle, that the person who brought the remedy had nothing to do in order to procure the pardon of those who repent. This is freely and purely the effect of the divine goodness. But the circumstances of the world might render it expedient that a declaration of pardon should be made. For if men have been sinners from the beginning of the world, as the Socinians do not deny, if the religion of the heathen was connected with much superstition, *i. e.* with a blind excessive fear of the Deity; and if the Jewish religion appointed a costly burdensome method of approaching the God of Israel, which could not be observed by all the nations of the earth, there seems to be much occasion that a religion

not confined to a particular tribe, but professing to spread itself over the whole world, and appointing a spiritual worship, should declare, in the most unequivocal and solemn manner, that encouragement to the penitent which is derived from the essential goodness of God. Now such declarations are known to abound in the Gospel: and they appear to the Socinians to give the religion of Jesus that importance which every one expects to find in a divine revelation. God appears there in Christ reconciling the world to himself, and repentance and remission of sins are preached in the name of Christ among all nations; not that Christ did any thing to render God propitious: but he is the messenger who publishes the divine grace. His first words were, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand;" his own discourses represent God as merciful; his apostles, after his ascension, preached the forgiveness of sins, saying, "Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out;" and his whole religion is a standing declaration of this proposition, which was always equally true, but the truth of which was not at all times perfectly understood, that "whosoever confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall have mercy."

This proposition, say the Socinians, approves itself by intrinsic evidence to a philosophical mind. But, in order to rouse the attention of the multitude, the person employed by God to publish it to the world was rendered respectable in their eyes by many mighty works. The miracles, which the power of God enabled the messenger of this grace to perform, were the credentials of a divine commission; and a splendour was thrown around his character by the other purposes which his appearance accomplished.

One of these additional purposes was his being the instructor of the world, who not only restored, by the declaration which he was commissioned to make, the natural confidence that men ought to have in the goodness of their Creator, but also taught them the will of God. As the Socinians do not admit that the first man possessed more knowledge and righteousness than any of his posterity, their principles lead them to deny those remains of the image of God which other Christians trace, to detract very much from the authority of the law of nature, and to resolve all religious knowledge into the tradition of some

primary revelation. This tradition could not fail to be obscured and corrupted in the progress of ages; and as gross ignorance of the duties of men is known to have overspread the earth, it is manifest that there was much need of the perfect teaching of a man, whose miracles were both a security that he taught the will of God truly, and a call upon men to listen to him. In this opinion of the usefulness of Christianity, all who receive it as a divine revelation readily agree. But the Socinians, as if desirous to atone by this branch of their encomium upon Christianity for the dishonour which other parts of their systems are conceived to do to that religion, go far beyond other Christians in magnifying the importance of the Gospel as a method of instruction. They represent its precepts as not only simple, clear, and authoritative, but as inculcating virtues which are neither explicitly taught in the law of Moses, nor deducible from any of its principles; and they allow the messenger of the grace of God all the honour which can accrue to his character and to his religion from the essential superiority of his precepts.

In delivering to a world full of superstition and vice precepts so opposite to their maxims and manners, the messenger of the grace of God encountered much opposition; he provoked the civil and ecclesiastical rulers—he alarmed the evil passions that he endeavoured to restrain —and after a life marked with uncommon difficulties and unmerited persecution, he was put to death by the violence of his enemies. His death is considered by the Socinians as the unavoidable result of the circumstances in which he published his excellent religion; an event happening without any special appointment of heaven, according to the course of human affairs; for, having persevered during a life of suffering in bearing witness to the truth, and being incapable of retracting, even in the immediate prospect of death, like other martyrs he sealed his declaration with his blood. The death of Christ, even although regarded merely as a natural event, is full of instruction to his followers. The innocence of the illustrious sufferer was made conspicuous by all the circumstances which attended his trial; the patience, the magnanimity, the piety, and benevolence, which marked the hour of his sufferings imprint upon those who cherish his memory with affection all

the lessons of his religion; and having taught men the will of God while he lived, he suffered for their benefit, "leaving them an example that they should follow his steps."

But the example exhibited in his sufferings, and the testimony which he bore by them to all that he had said during his life, are not the only benefits of the death of Christ which the modern Socinians admit. They say also, that it confirmed the truth of the promises of God; for his death was necessary in order to his resurrection, and his resurrection not only completes the evidences of his mission, but is the earnest to mankind of life and immortality, that great blessing which he was commissioned to promise. It is this further purpose of the death of Christ which completes the Socinian scheme of Christianity; and therefore, in order to render the view which I am now giving a fair exposition of that scheme, it is necessary to state the peculiar importance which it affixes to this purpose.

Not admitting any forfeiture to have been incurred by the transgression of Adam, the Socinians consider man as mortal, a creature who would have died whether he had sinned or not. Dr. Priestley goes farther upon this subject than some of those who adopt his other principles have yet been able to follow him. He holds that the distinction between soul and body is 'a popular error, derived from heathen philosophy, but contradicted by reason and Scripture; that man is a homogeneous being, *i. e.* that the powers of thought and sensation belong to the brain, as much as gravity and magnetism belong to other arrangements of matter; and that the whole machine, whose complicated motions had presented the appearance of animal and rational life, is dissolved at death. To Dr. Priestley, therefore, the resurrection promised in the Gospel is the highest possible gift, because, according to his system, it is the restoration of existence. But even those Socinians, who do not so far depart from the conclusions of sound philosophy as to believe that the phenomena of thought can be explained without supposing an immaterial principle in man, while they allow that this principle may survive the body, are inclined to compare the state in which it is left, after the dissolution of the body, to a kind of sleep, in which all the faculties of the soul continue sus-

pended till the resurrection. Being led, by their system concerning the fall to infer from the present appearance of death that it is part of the original constitution of nature, and finding no reasoning in favour of a future state amongst those who had not the benefit of revelation so clear and decisive as to satisfy a speculative mind, and no explicit promise in the law of Moses, they consider immortality as a free gift which the Almighty may have bestowed upon those who died in ancient times, but a gift the assurance of which is conveyed to the human race solely by the religion of Christ. Here, therefore, the Socinians place the great value and importance of the Gospel. Whether man consists of spirit and body united in an inexplicable manner, or whether his whole frame be only an organization of matter more exquisite than any which he beholds, he cannot infer with certainty from any deductions of his own reason that he shall survive that event, which, happening in the established course of nature, puts an end to all his labours and enjoyments upon earth. But the Gospel brings life and immortality to light. While it declares that the God who made man is ready to forgive all his wanderings, and to receive him into favour upon his repentance, it promises to reward the obedience and virtue of this short life by raising him from the sleep of death, by restoring to him at the resurrection, whatever had been his state in the intervening period, all those capacities which death seemed to have annihilated, and by introducing him to a life of endless and complete bliss.

This promise corresponds with that essential goodness of the Deity from which the declaration of pardon flows; but it is infinitely beyond the deserts of a frail sinful creature: and, therefore, that it may take possession of the mind of man, that he may rest without hesitation in the certainty of the gift, and that he may derive all the comfort and improvement which the prospect is fitted to administer, it is necessary that every confirmation of the promise, every sensible proof which the nature of the case admits, should be given him. Now this sensible proof is afforded by means of the death of Jesus Christ; and hence the great advantage which the world derives from that fact. A man, say the Socinians, not distinguished from

his brethren in his origin or in the powers of his nature, having been employed by God to teach his will and to declare the promise of pardon and life eternal to those who repent, is exposed, in the execution of this commission, to sufferings more severe than those which fall to the lot of ordinary men; he endures them with patience, and the virtues of his character are illustrated by his sorrows. But instead of being enabled to surmount them, he is delivered by God into the hands of his enemies, that being put to death by their malice, he might be raised by the power of the Creator. In three days he returns from the grave; and the evidence of his resurrection is so remarkably circumstantial, that there is not, perhaps, says Dr. Priestley, any fact in ancient history so perfectly credible according to the established rules of evidence. But the resurrection of the man, who promised in the name of God that at the last day all shall rise, is a demonstration in his person that a general resurrection is possible; it is an assurance from God of the fulfilment of the promise, the most level to the apprehensions of the generality of mankind, and it is connected with that glorious reward upon which the Scriptures say this man has already entered. For, whatever may be the state of other men till the general resurrection, we are told that this man has ascended to heaven, and is now invested with supreme dignity and bliss. His recompense is held forth in Scripture as the encouragement and the security to his disciples that they shall in due time receive theirs; and the encouragement and security are founded upon this circumstance, that he was a man like them, who suffered and died. So speak the apostles; "if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him."* Every man in his own order; Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's."† And our Lord himself said to his apostles, "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations; and I appoint unto you a kingdom as my father hath appointed unto me."‡ Socinus and his immediate followers admitted that power of Christ in dispensing the recompense of his disciples, which seems to be intimated in the last of these passages, and in

* 1 Thess. iv. 14. † 1 Cor. xv. 23. ‡ Luke xxii. 28, 29.

such other expressions as these, his giving a crown of life, his granting to sit down with him on his throne, his raising the dead, and his judging the world. But the modern Socinians preserve the consistency of their scheme by giving figurative interpretations of all such phrases, and so resolving the accomplishment of that promise which proceeded from the love of God, purely into his power and will, without the interposition of any other being. Christ may be employed as an instrument of fulfilling the pleasure of the Almighty; but so may angels, so may virtuous men; and it is not from any inherent power that Christ possesses, but from that example of the truth of the promise which Christians behold in his having been raised from the dead and set at God's right hand, that they derive the full assurance of hope.

This system of pure Socinianism which I have now delineated I shall state in a few sentences, gathered from Dr. Priestley's History of the Doctrine of Atonement. "The great object of the mission and death of Christ was to give the fullest proof of a state of retribution, in order to supply the strongest motives to virtue; and the making an express regard to the doctrine of a resurrection to immortal life the principal sanction of the laws of virtue is an advantage peculiar to Christianity. By this peculiar advantage the Gospel reforms the world, and remission of sin is consequent on reformation. For, although there are some texts in which the pardon of sin seems to be represented as dispensed in consideration of the sufferings, the merits, the resurrection, the life, or the obedience of Christ, we cannot but conclude, upon a careful examination, that all these views of it are partial representations, and that, according to the plain general tenor of Scripture, the pardon of sin is, in reality, always dispensed by the free mercy of God upon account of men's personal virtue, a penitent upright heart, and a reformed exemplary life, without regard to the sufferings or merit of any being whatever."

The Socinians endeavour to accommodate to this system all those expressions which Christians have learned from Scripture to apply to the Gospel remedy. The following instances may serve as a specimen of their mode of interpretation. Christ died for us, *i. e.* for our benefit, be-

cause we derive much advantage from his death. He is our mediator, because he came from God to us to declare the divine mercy. He saves his people from their sins, because the influence of his precepts and his example, supported by the hope of a future life which he has revealed, leads them from sin to the practice of righteousness. His blood cleanseth us from all sin, because, being shed in confirmation of his doctrine, and as a step to his resurrection, it furnishes the most powerful incentives to virtue; and we have redemption, through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, because we are led by the due consideration of his death and its consequences, to that repentance which, under the merciful constitution of the divine government, always obtains forgiveness.

According to this system, then, Jesus Christ is a teacher of righteousness, the messenger of divine grace, the publisher of a future life, the bright example of every virtue, and the most illustrious pattern of its reward. As far as these expressions go, he is the Saviour and Redeemer of the world; but it is not allowed that he did any thing further to merit this character. His religion is the most perfect system of morality, delivering with the authority of heaven a more plain, and complete, and spiritual rule of duty than is anywhere else to be found, and exciting men to follow that rule by hopes which no other teacher was commissioned to give. It is, in these respects, the most effectual lesson of righteousness which ever was addressed to the world; and in this sense only it is a remedy for the present state of moral evil.

This system accords with all the principles held by those who are now called Socinians, and forms part of a great scheme, which, however blame-worthy it may be in many respects, has the merit of being consistent. But to Christians who do not hold these principles in their full extent, it appears to labour under insuperable difficulties.

Those who believe in the pre-existence of Jesus cannot consider his death as merely a natural event, like the death of any other man; and they look for some purpose of his dying beyond that of affording, by his resurrection, an example of a dead man brought to life, because Jesus, appearing to them in this respect essentially distinguished from all other men, that he existed before he was born, may

be also distinguished in this further respect, that he returned to existence after he died. We know that some of the ancient philosophers were accustomed to argue for a future life, from that state of pre-existence which they assigned to the soul; and the inference is so natural and obvious, if the supposition upon which it proceeds is admitted, that, whether the Arian or the Athanasian system be adopted with regard to the dignity which Jesus had before he was born, no argument, drawn from the death and resurrection of this singular personage, can be a sufficient warrant for ordinary men to expect that they also shall be raised. Those who have a strong apprehension of the evil of sin and of the authority of the divine government, and who observe that even amongst men repentance does not always restore a person to the condition in which he was before he sinned, cannot readily admit that a simple declaration of forgiveness to all who return to their duty is consistent with the holiness and majesty of the Ruler of the universe; more especially as this declaration does not barely remit the punishment of transgression, but is connected with a promise of eternal life; a promise which other Christians consider as restoring what had been forfeited by Adam, which the Socinians consider as so peculiar to the Gospel, that it gives to man a hope which he never had before, and which all acknowledge to contain a free inestimable gift. There appears to be an expediency in some testimony of the divine displeasure against sin, at the time of declaring that such a gift is to be conferred upon penitents; and if there are in Scripture many intimations of such a testimony, they, who are impressed with a sense that it is expedient, will not be disposed to explain them away.

Those who form their system of theology upon the language of Scripture do not find themselves warranted to sink Jesus to the office of a messenger of the Divine mercy, when they recollect that he is said to have washed us from our sins in his own blood, and to have bought us with a price; that repentance and remission of sins are uniformly connected with something which he did; that according to his command they were preached by his apostles in his name, and that they are said to be granted by him. Different systems have been formed for explain-

ing such expressions; but many Christian writers, who do not pretend to decide which of the systems is true or whether it is becoming in us to form any system upon the subject at all, consider expressions of this kind as plainly teaching that the interposition of Christ was somehow efficacious in procuring the pardon of sin; and it appears to them that this efficacy, whatever be the nature of it, must go very far beyond the bare declaration of a proposition which was always true, that God is merciful.

All these reasons for rejecting the Socinian system are very much confirmed by attending to the descriptions given in Scripture of the honour and power to which Jesus Christ is now exalted. Although the modern Socinians, feeling that these descriptions are inconsistent with their system, have attempted to resolve into mere figures of speech what Socinus himself interpreted literally, any Christian who reads the New Testament, not with a view to reconcile it to his own system, but in order to learn what it contains, cannot entertain a doubt that the person who appeared upon earth in a humble form, the Saviour of men, is now exalted as their Lord; that all power in heaven and in earth is committed to him; and that he is ordained of God to be the judge of the quick and the dead. But why is Jesus thus exalted? Although his being preserved from that sleep of the soul which some Christians have supposed, or his being raised out of the grave from that complete dissolution which Dr. Priestley's materialism teaches, may be useful to Christians as a living example of a resurrection, it cannot be said that his being advanced to the government of the universe is necessary to give us assurance of a future life. According to the Socinian system, we cannot discern in the services of this man any merit beyond that of other messengers of heaven, or even of his own apostles; and we do not perceive any purpose which is to be attained by his receiving a recompense so infinitely above his deserts. If the forgiveness of sin and the gift of immortality flow entirely from the mercy of God, without regard to any other being whatever, the security of them does not, in the smallest degree, depend upon the condition of the messenger by whom they were promised; so that the powers, which the Scriptures ascribe to that messenger are a mere waste,

and his exaltation, unlike any other work of God, is without meaning.

Such are the objections which Christians of different descriptions are led, by their principles, to urge against the Socinian system of redemption. Many able and serious men, who felt the force of these objections, could not reconcile their minds to the third system, which they found to be the general faith of the Christian church; and hence has arisen a middle system, which, as it is certainly clear of the objections that have now been stated, appears to some to comprehend the whole doctrine of Scripture upon this subject.

SECTION II.

The middle system is founded upon a part of the doctrine of Socinus, which the modern Socinians have thrown out, viz. the power given by God to Jesus Christ after his resurrection. But many additions were made to this article in the course of the last century, and it has been spread out by several writers into a complete and beautiful system. My knowledge of it is derived from an Essay on Redemption, written by an English clergyman, John Balguy, and republished by Dr. Thomas Balguy; from a book entitled Ben Mordecai's Apology for becoming a Christian, consisting of letters upon the peculiar doctrines of Christianity, written by Mr. Taylor, another English clergyman; and from a volume of sermons published by Dr. Price, the celebrated English dissenter, who, rejecting both the Socinian and the Calvinistic systems, gives to this the name which I have borrowed from him, calling it the middle system. Availing myself of these sources of information, I shall give a short exposition of the middle system, which may enable you to form a conception of the manner in which the parts of it are linked together, and of the principles by which it is supported.

The fundamental principle of the middle system is, that under the government of a righteous God a distinction ought to be made between innocents and penitents. It is allowed that God, who is accountable to none, may freely forgive the sins of his creatures; it is allowed that, being infinitely merciful, he has no delight in punishing them; it is allowed that repentance, without which no sinner can be received, is a commendable disposition. But after all these things are granted to the Socinians, it is still conceived to be right in itself, that those, who have sinned, should not feel their situation in every respect the same as if they had uniformly obeyed the commands of their Creator; and it is considered as a lesson which may be useful both to themselves and to other parts of the universe, that the restoration of the human race to the divine favour should be marked by some circumstances sufficient to preserve the memory of their transgression. It is observed that, in the course of human affairs, the effects of the vices of some are often repaired by the virtues of others, repaired not only to society, but to themselves. When they become sensible of their misconduct, they do not always find it possible by any personal effort to extricate themselves from all the evils in which they are involved, or to recover that place in society which they had forfeited; but they are relieved by some generous interposition; their professions of repentance are accepted at the intercession of a respectable friend, for the sake of something which had been done by another; and their re-establishment in their former condition, which was not due to themselves, thus becomes a part of the tribute paid by society to that uniform virtue, which is felt by all men to be worthy both of confidence and of reward. Upon this principle proceeded the pleading of Appius in his own defence: "Majorum merita," says Livy, "in rempublicam commemorabat, quo poenam deprecaretur."* In like manner Tacitus says, "Plautio mors remittitur ob patrui egregium meritum."† And Cicero, proceeding upon his knowledge and experience of the sentiments of mankind, delivers this general rule, "oportebit eum, qui sibi ut ignoscatur postulabit,—majorum suorum beneficia, si quae

* Liv. iii. 56. † Tac. Ann. xi. 36.

extabunt, proferre."* So we read in the Old Testament that God was merciful to the children of Israel for Abraham's sake ;† that he pardoned their idolatry at the intercession of Moses ;‡ and that he accepted the prayer of his servant Job for the three friends, who had not spoken of him the thing that is right.§

These and other instances of the same kind in the history of Scripture, according with what we often behold amongst men, and corresponding also with our apprehension of the essential difference between the merit of those who have always obeyed, and of those who only repent of their sin, are considered in the middle system as an opening of the great scheme revealed in the Gospel.

Jesus Christ, the first born of every creature, by whom God made the worlds, the purest and the most glorious being that ever proceeded from the Father of all, beheld the miserable condition of the human race, the forfeiture which they had incurred by the transgression of Adam, and the multiplied offences which they are daily committing against the majesty of heaven. Prompted by love to the souls of men, he left the bosom of the Father, laid aside the glories of his nature, and became a man of sorrows, that he might extricate from evil those whom he had made. All the scorn and persecution which he received while he went about doing good to men; all the amazement and agony which his pure spirit sustained amidst the iniquities of those with whom he dwelt; all the bitter sufferings which marked the end of his life upon earth, were the voluntary acts of a person who had devoted himself to the accomplishment of a most gracious purpose. They were accepted by God, who, not willing that any should perish, had given the Son of his love to be in this manner the deliverer of the human race; and they were rewarded by the powers conferred upon him after his resurrection. His reward added to the dignity of his character, by placing him at the head of the creation, and rendering the most exalted spirits subject to his dominion. But it was not the prospect of any increase of his personal glory which called forth his exertions. He had no need

* Cic. de Inv. ii. 35.
† Ps. cv. 42, 43.
‡ Exod. xxxii.
§ Job xlii.

to be greater or happier than he was before he visited this earth; and he would not appear in a light so truly exalted, had he come here merely with the view of holding a higher place in heaven when he returned thither. The joy set before the Redeemer of the world, for which it is said he endured the cross, the recompense in the prospect of which he left the mansions of bliss, and drank the bitter cup given him by his Father, is to be gathered from such passages in the New Testament as the following: John v. 26, 27; vi. 39; xvii. 2. Acts v. 31. Heb. ii. 9, 10; v. 9.

The idea which is plainly expressed in some of these passages, and which appears to be implied in all of them, is this: that there was given to the Son of man, after his sufferings, the power of recovering a lost world, of removing all the evils which sin had introduced, of raising men from death, which is the punishment of sin, and of bringing those that repent to eternal life. All this is the reward of the services of the Redeemer; that is, although it redounds to the advantage of the penitents, it is not given to them as what they earn for themselves, but it is given to him as his recompense; and in this exalted sense are fulfilled the words which the evangelical prophet Isaiah introduced into his prediction of the sufferings of the Messiah: "he shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many."* Jesus Christ did see of the travail of his soul and was satisfied; in other words, he received his reward by justifying many.

The natural recompense of disinterested exertion, and the purest joy which a benevolent mind can taste, is an enlargement of the power of doing good. Feeble dependent creatures like us are glad to receive, as a reward of the good which we do from love unfeigned, an extension of the sphere of our private enjoyments, and an establishment of our own security. But he, who is styled in Scripture the Son of Man, and the brightness of his Father's glory, submitted to suffering purely for this purpose, that he might receive from his Father the right of communicating happiness; and the more complete and irretrievable on the part of man the forfeiture by sin had been, and

* Isaiah liii. 11.

the more extensive and precious the blessings which the Redeemer is empowered to convey, so much the more exquisite and glorious is his reward.

This system derives considerable support from its preserving that striking contrast between the first and the second Adam, which we found the Apostle Paul marking in the fifth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans. "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one many shall be made righteous." The punishment of Adam is transmitted to those who do not sin after the similitude of his transgression. But the evils which flow from this constitution meet in the Gospel with a remedy perfectly analogous to the disease; for the reward of Jesus Christ is communicated to those who are very unlike himself; and, according to the middle system, it is literally by his obedience that many are made righteous.

The middle system is further supported by its exhibiting, in a most pleasing and instructive light, that essential difference between those who have uniformly obeyed God, and those who only repent of their transgressions, which we expect to find under the government of God. That exalted Being, who, in making the worlds, fulfilled the commandment of God, and in whom the Father was always well pleased, by coming to this earth to do the will of God, had an opportunity of displaying before angels and men, in a degree more eminent than they had ever beheld, humility, obedience, resignation, patience, fortitude, generosity; and this transcendent excellence of virtue was crowned with a reward the most illustrious which the Father ever bestowed, and the most delightful to him upon whom it was conferred, the power of extricating the human race from all the evils which they had incurred by sin, and of restoring to them the gift of immortality which they had forfeited. In this method of saving sinners there is a continual memorial of the evil of sin, and a lesson to all the intelligent creation of God, that without some very singular interposition those who have sinned cannot obtain pardon. For, although the Son of God was connected with the human race from the time that by him God made the worlds, a much closer connexion was necessary in order to their being saved from sin; and the constitution, by which penitents are received into the divine favour, is

such as to make them feel a constant and an entire dependence upon their Redeemer. It is by his power that they are delivered from the effects of their transgression: the accomplishment of their salvation is premial to him, not to them, that is, all that they receive is given them, not, upon their own account, but upon account of what he hath done. At the same time, this method of checking the presumption of sinners is a bright display of divine love. God the Father provides a method for receiving his returning children into his family; and he rewards the generous exertion of his own Son, by opening the mansions of heaven to those whom his Son shall bring thither. In all the steps of their progress heavenward, they experience the grace of the Redeemer, and daily reap the fruit of his reward; and when they shall at length enter the city of the living God, their numbers and their felicity will redound to his honour. "These are they," as one of the elders about the throne said to John in the Revelation, "which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." "They follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth;" and the new song that is sung by every creature in heaven has a peculiar significancy when it proceeds from their mouth, "worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and honour, and glory, and blessing."

Many of the passages of Scripture, which Christians are accustomed to apply to the remedy brought in the Gospel, receive an interpretation at once more exalted and more natural from those who hold the middle system, than from those who hold the Socinian. According to the middle system, Jesus is said to be the propitiation for our sins, because by his meritorious obedience he hath procured our reconciliation with God. He is said to have given himself an offering and a sacrifice to God for us, because he devoted himself to death in order to accomplish our salvation. He is our mediator, because through him we have access to the Father. He is our advocate, who maketh intercession for us, because all that we ask, and all that we receive is for his sake, because nothing is due to us, but all that heaven can bestow is due to the perfection of his obedience; and we are saved by him, because, with the same grace which led him to suffer for

our sakes, he imparts, to those who repent, the gifts which he hath received from his Father, accounting their salvation his reward. A system, which gives such views of our dependence upon our Redeemer, follows out those lessons of humility by which the Gospel has for ever excluded the presumption of sinners, and the boasting of those who are saved; and it may be regarded as a commentary upon these words of the apostle, "All things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's;"* and upon the words of our Lord himself, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."†

The middle system, which I have now delineated, has the merit of being beautiful and consistent. As far as it goes, it proceeds, in a great measure, upon the language and the views of the New Testament. It appears to unite, in the pardon of those who repent, the rectitude which becomes the Judge of the universe, with that compassion which we feel ourselves so willing to ascribe to the Deity. It gives penitents all that security for being restored to the divine favour, and for obtaining the reward of eternal life, which can arise from the power of their Redeemer; and it seems so peculiarly calculated to illustrate his glory, that, in the affectionate admiration with which it is natural for Christians to regard him, the heart inclines the understanding to receive it as the whole truth.

But there are two objections to this system, which, with a great part of the Christian world, are sufficient to counterbalance these advantages, so far as to satisfy them, that although a great part of this system may be true, it is not a complete account of the Gospel remedy.

The first objection is, that the middle system plainly involves in it the Arian opinion concerning the person of Christ. It presents to our view a being, who, by performing a hard service in the government of God, acquires new powers, and is advanced to a degree of supremacy and a capacity of conferring happiness, which he did not formerly possess. But this view of Christ is totally inconsistent with the Athanasian system. Those, who believe that Jesus Christ is truly and essentially God, think that they are naturally led, by the manner in which his exalta-

* 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23. † Rev. iii. 21.

tion is spoken of in Scripture, to consider it as part of the οἰκονομία there revealed, a manifestation of the Son of God, an investiture of the same person in his human nature with that glory which he had from eternity in his divine. But they cannot believe that he became, by suffering, more able to save than he was before. They are compelled, by their creed, to remove from their conceptions of him all those ideas of dependence and changeableness which are necessarily implied in an enlargement of powers; and they cannot degrade him whom they worship as God, equal with the Father, to a rank with those inferior spirits, who, by progressive improvements in goodness, may become worthy of holding more conspicuous stations, and of being appointed to more important offices in the administration of the universe.

The second objection to the middle system is, that although a beautiful and plausible theory, yet, like many other theories, it proceeds upon a partial view of facts. It is the theory of men who are satisfied that the Socinian scheme is indefensible, but who are at the same time solicitous to avoid those particular determinate views of the sufferings of Christ, which other Christians derive from a literal interpretation of Scripture. Hence they are obliged to have recourse to such views as are vague and general. They studiously throw into the shade many parts of that information which the Scriptures have been generally supposed to convey; and they hope, by the splendid parts of their theory, to occupy and please the mind, so that the defect shall not be felt. Accordingly it will be observed, that while the power, which the Redeemer is supposed to have acquired by his sufferings, stands forth in this theory a luminous object, no specific reason is assigned for the sufferings. They are a display of benevolence, a virtuous exertion on the part of the Redeemer, and the reward of them redounds in the most effectual manner to the benefit of the human race. But we do not see, by this theory, any thing in the sufferings peculiarly applicable to the situation of those who are redeemed. Exertions of another kind might have merited the same reward; and we feel ourselves at a loss to account for the fitness of many things which he endured, and for a great part of that language in which the Scriptures speak of his sufferings.

SECTION III.

THE two preceding schemes concerning the nature of the Gospel remedy are the invention of modern times. What I called the Catholic opinion upon this subject appears to have been derived from the Scriptures by the earliest Christian writers; it has been generally held in the Christian world; and it enters into the creed of the two established churches of this island. The church of England concludes the second article, which is a description of the Son of God, with these words, "who truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for actual sins of men." And the same opinion is more fully expressed in the prayer of consecration which forms part of the communion service, "Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who of thy tender mercy didst give thine only Son Jesus Christ to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption, who made there, by his one oblation of himself once offered, a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world." The words of our Confession of Faith, chap. viii. 5, are these, "The Lord Jesus, by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, which he, through the eternal Spirit, once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of his Father; and purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven for all those whom the Father hath given unto him." It is the first part of this paragraph which is peculiar to the Catholic opinion; for those who hold the middle system also say that, by the merit of Christ's obedience, they who repent shall receive the reward of eternal life; and therefore they need not scruple to say that he purchased an everlasting inheritance for them. But they do not admit that he hath fully satisfied the justice of the Father, by his sacrifice of himself offered up unto God; and this is the point in which they unite with the Socinians. This distinguishing part of the Catholic opinion is known by the name of the doctrine of the atonement, or the satisfaction of Christ. The subject is in itself so important, it has re-

ceived such ample and acute discussion from the times of Socinus to the present day, and the points in controversy enter so much into all the discourses and offices of the ministers of the Gospel, that I should fail in my duty if I did not speak of it fully. A much shorter illustration will suffice for the other part of the catholic opinion,—the manner in which those who hold it connect the promise and the hope of life everlasting with the obedience of Jesus Christ.

The doctrine of the atonement or satisfaction of Christ is not necessarily connected with a belief in his divinity; for this doctrine was ably defended by Dr. Clarke, and it is held by many who avow that they do not consider the Son as truly God. But it is impossible for any one, who believes that Jesus Christ is a mere man, to entertain such an opinion of the value of his sufferings, as to think that they could be a sacrifice for the sins of the world, and a satisfaction to the justice of God. A denial, therefore, of the pre-existence of our Saviour, and a denial of the doctrine of satisfaction, are the two leading features of Socinianism, and they necessarily go together; whereas all, as far as I know, without exception, who believe in the Trinity, and a part of those who consider Jesus as the most exalted creature of God, embrace that part of the catholic opinion which we are now to state, that is to say, they believe that, as this glorious person could not suffer in the form of God, he was made in the likeness of men, and dwelt amongst us in the body prepared for him, for this purpose chiefly, that he might suffer for the sins of men; that the sorrows of his life, the agony of his last hours, and the bitterness of his death, were the punishment due to our transgressions, which it pleased the Father to lay upon him, and which he cheerfully undertook; and that the sins of those who repent and believe are forgiven upon account of this substitution of Jesus Christ in their stead, which is called his vicarious suffering.

It is well known, that the general strain of Scripture favours this opinion; for we meet with numberless expressions of this kind. "Christ was delivered for our offences; he suffered for sins, the just for the unjust; by his stripes we are healed; he hath made peace by the blood of his cross—he hath given himself for us an offering, and a sa-

crifice of a sweet smelling savour." But it is not by a bare enumeration of such texts, than which there is nothing more easy, that the Catholic opinion is to be established. For those who oppose it do not deny that it appears to be favoured by the language of Scripture. But they maintain that it is liable to so many objections, and in particular is so contrary to the moral attributes of the Deity, that it cannot be true, and that they would not believe it even although it were taught in Scripture more plainly than it is: and they say further, that this opinion, though apparently favoured by Scripture, is not necessarily implied in the language there used, that the phrases employed by those who hold it, viz. vindictive justice, vicarious suffering, substitution, and satisfaction, are of human invention, and that the expressions in Scripture which have been conceived to warrant such phrases admit of a milder interpretation.

This being the manner in which the Catholic opinion is combated, those who defend it have to show, in the first place, that it is not irrational or unjust; for, if it were, it could not form, as they say it does, the most important article in the Christian revelation; and, in the second place, after they have fairly stated and vindicated their opinion, it remains for them to show that it is unquestionably the doctrine of Scripture, that the views there given of the method of our redemption by the sufferings of Christ, correspond with the language which they employ in stating their opinion, and with the principles upon which they rest the vindication of it. I shall follow this natural division of the defence of the doctrine of the atonement; and I think that I shall thus be able to furnish you with a complete view of the kind of argument employed to prove that it is agreeable to reason, and that it is taught by Scripture.

CHAP. III.

DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT.

The first thing, necessary for those who defend the Catholic opinion respecting the Gospel remedy, is to show that it may be stated in such a manner as not to appear irrational or unjust. The objections urged against it are of a very formidable kind. Christians who hold other systems concerning the Gospel remedy unite with the enemies of revelation in misrepresenting this doctrine; and if you form your notion of it from the accounts commonly given by either of these classes of writers, you will perhaps be disposed to agree with Socinus in thinking, that whether it be contained in the Scriptures or not it cannot be true. It has been said that this doctrine represents the Almighty as moved with fury at the insults offered to his Supreme Majesty, as impatient to pour forth his fury upon some being, as indifferent whether that being deserves it or not, and as perfectly appeased upon finding an object of vengeance in his own innocent Son. It has been said that a doctrine which represents the Almighty as sternly demanding a full equivalent for that which was due to him, and as receiving that equivalent in the sufferings of his Son, transfers all the affection and gratitude of the human race, from an inexorable being who did not remit any part of his right to another being who satisfied his claim. It has been said that a translation of guilt is impossible, because guilt is personal, and that a doctrine which represents the innocent as punished instead of the guilty, and the guilty as escaping by this punishment, contradicts the first principles of justice, subverts all our ideas of a righteous government, and, by holding forth an example of reward and punishment dispensed by heaven, without any

regard to the character of those who receive them, does, in fact, encourage men to live as they please.

These objections are the more formidable, that they have received no small countenance from the language of many of the most zealous friends of this doctrine. The atonement presents a subject of speculation most interesting to the great body of the people, who are always incapable of metaphysical precision of thought; it enters into loose and popular harangues delivered by many who are more accustomed to speak than to think; and the manner of stating it has been too often accommodated to prejudices which are inconsistent with truth, and adverse to morality. It is not surprising that in such circumstances the mistakes of the friends of this doctrine have given much advantage to the misrepresentation of its enemies; and it is upon this account very necessary for you, the great object of whose study is to acquire just and enlarged apprehensions of the whole scheme of Christian doctrine, that you may be able to defend that truth which you understand, to beware of forming your notions of this capital article of our faith from the incorrect superficial statements of it which may come in your way.

Happily for your instruction, the objections to this doctrine have called forth some of the greatest masters of reason in its defence. Grotius, whose comprehensive vigorous mind was illuminated by an intimate acquaintance with jurisprudence, wrote, in answer to Socinus, a treatise, *De Satisfactione Christi*, which is both a fair exposition and a complete vindication of the doctrine; and the reply published by Crellius, an adherent of Socinus, was answered in the end of the seventeenth century by the learned and able Bishop Stillingfleet, who, in his discourse on the sufferings of Christ, has unfolded and illustrated the leading principles laid down by Grotius, and by applying them to the acute reasonings of Crellius, has shown how ready a solution they afford of every objection. Dr. Clarke, with that accuracy of thought and that precision of language which are his characteristics, has explained within a short compass, in a sermon upon the nature of the sufferings of Christ, and elsewhere occasionally, the true principles of this doctrine. The general circulation of Dr. Clarke's works has rendered these principles familiar to

many, who have not leisure to study the more elaborate treatises of Grotius and Stillingfleet; they are now pretty generally understood, and you will find them spread out, and applied with much propriety to the form in which some modern writers have brought forward the ancient objections, in two treatises published not many years ago, the one entitled, Jesus Christ the Mediator between God and Man, by Tomkins; the other, Vicarious Sacrifice, by Elliot.

Availing myself of these helps, I shall now proceed to state that precise notion of the doctrine of the atonement, upon which the reasonableness of it is rested by those who know best how to defend it. This fair statement of the Catholic opinion will involve in it an answer to the objections which I mentioned, and will prepare us for discovering, by a critical examination of various passages of Scripture, the evidence that it is there taught, and the views of it which are there given.

SECTION I.

The first principle upon which a fair statement of the doctrine of the atonement proceeds is this, that sin is a violation of law, and that the Almighty, in requiring an atonement in order to the pardon of sin, acts as the supreme lawgiver. So important is this principle, that all the objections to the doctrine proceed upon other views of sin, which, to a certain extent, appear to be just, but which cannot be admitted to be complete without acknowledging that it is impossible to answer the objections. Thus, if you consider sin as merely an insult to the majesty of heaven, God the Father as the person offended by this insult, and that wrath of God, of which the Scriptures speak, as something analogous to the emotion of anger excited in our breasts by the petulance of our neighbours, it would

seem, according to the notions which we entertain, more generous to lay aside this wrath, and to accept of an acknowledgment of the offence, than to demand reparation of the insult; and it may be thought that the Almighty, in requiring another to suffer before an offence which is personal to himself can be forgiven, discovers a jealousy of his own dignity unbecoming that supreme majesty, which is incapable of being tarnished by the conduct of his creatures. In like manner, if, because our Lord sometimes calls trespasses by the name of debts, we stretch the comparison so far as to make it a complete description of sin, if, following out the similitude, we consider the Almighty as a creditor to whom the sinner has contracted a debt, and forgiveness as the remission of that debt which would have been paid by the punishment of the sinner, there does not occur from this description any reason why the Almighty may not as freely forgive the sins of his creatures, as a creditor may remit what is due to himself; and therefore, when, instead of doing so, he requires payment of the debt by the sufferings of his Son, he appears in the light of a rigorous creditor, who, having insisted upon his own, although the person originally bound was not able to pay, receives it from a surety, so that all that grace of God in the forgiveness of sin, which the Scriptures extol, is without meaning, for when the debt is paid, the liberation of the debtor is a matter of right, not of favour. Further, if the intrinsic evil of sin is the only thing attended to, and the sinner be considered in no other light than as a reasonable creature who has deformed his nature, and whose character has become odious, it may be thought that repentance is the proper remedy of this evil. Men, not being qualified to judge of the sincerity of those who profess sorrow for their past trespasses, would act unwisely if they pardoned every person who appears to be penitent; but it is impossible that the Supreme Being can be mistaken in judging of the hearts of men; and, therefore, if the hatefulness of their conduct be the only cause of alienation, whenever he discerns in them the marks of true reformation, that cause no longer exists, and the sinner, by a real change upon his character, returns into favour with his Creator. According to this view of the matter, all that is necessary for dispensing forgiveness is an effectual method

of promoting reformation; and the Socinians appear to give a complete account of the Gospel of Christ, when they say that it saves us from our sins by leading us to forsake them.

Thus many of the principal objections against the doctrine of atonement remain without an answer, when we confine our notions of sin to these three views of it. But although it be true that sin is an insult to the majesty of heaven, by which the Supreme Being is offended, that it is in some sense a debt to the Creator, and that it cannot be beheld by a pure spirit without the highest disapprobation, there is a further view of it not directly included under any of these; and all the objections which I mentioned arise from the stopping short at some one of these views, or at least employing the language peculiar to them, without going on to state this further view, that sin is a violation of the law given by the Supreme Being. But it is under the character of a lawgiver that the Almighty is to be regarded both in punishing and in forgiving the sins of men. For although by creation he is the absolute lord and proprietor of all, who may without challenge or control dispose of every part of his works in what manner he pleases, he does not exercise this right of sovereignty in the government of his reasonable creatures, but he has made known to them certain laws, which express what he would have them to do, and he has annexed to these laws certain sanctions which declare the rewards of obedience, and the consequences of transgression. It is this which constitutes what we call the moral government of God, of which all those actions of the Almighty, that respect what is right or wrong in the conduct of his reasonable creatures, form a part, and under which every man feels that he lives. For although this moral government be administered with very unequal measures of instruction to the subjects, there is no situation in which the human race have the use of their faculties, without recognising in one degree or other the law of their nature; and whether this knowledge be derived from sentiment, or reason, or tradition, or written revelation, every thing which to them is sin may with accuracy be defined the transgression of a law.

If the Almighty, then, is to be regarded as a lawgiver,

we must endeavour to rise to the most exalted conceptions which we are able to form of the plan of his moral government; and for this purpose it is necessary that we should abstract from every kind of weakness which is incident to the administration of human governments, and lay hold of those principles and maxims which reason and experience teach us to consider as essential to a good government, and without which it does not appear to us that that expression has any meaning.

Now it is the first principle of every good government, that laws are enacted for the benefit of the community. The happiness of the whole body depends upon their being observed, for they would not have been enacted, if the observance of them had been a matter of indifference to the public. Hence every person who violates the laws, besides the disrespect which he shows to that authority by which they were enacted, besides the hurt which individuals may sustain by his action, does an injury to the public, because he disturbs that order and security which the laws establish. It is therefore essential to the excellence of government, that there succeeds, immediately after disobedience, what is called guilt, *i. e.* the desert of punishment, an obligation to suffer that which the law prescribes. Accordingly in the code of laws of many northern nations, who were accustomed to estimate all crimes at certain rates, a murderer not only paid a sum to the relations of the deceased, as a compensation for their loss, but he paid a sum to the king for the breach of the peace.* And in all countries, that which is properly called punishment does not mean the putting the rights of a private party, who may have been immediately injured, in the same state in which they were before the trespass was committed, but it means the reparation made to the public by the suffering of the criminal, for the disorder arising from his breach of the laws. The law generally defines what the measure of this suffering shall be, and it is applied to particular cases by criminal judges, who, being only interpreters of the law, have no power to remit the punishment. It is true that in most human governments a power is lodged somewhere of granting pardon,

* Tac. Germ. xii.

because, from the imperfection which necessarily adheres to them, it may often be inexpedient or even unjust that a person who has been legally condemned should suffer; and there are times when the legislature sees meet to pass acts of indemnity. But it is only in very particular circumstances that the safety of the state admits the escape of a criminal; and in most cases the supreme authority proceeds, not with wrath, but from a calm and fixed regard to the essential interests of the community, to deter other subjects from violating the laws, by exhibiting to their view punishment as the consequence of transgression.

If we apply these maxims and principles, which appear to us implied in the very nature of good government, we shall find it impossible to conceive of God as a lawgiver, without thinking it essential to his character to punish transgression; and the perfection of his government, far from superseding this exercise of that character, seems to render it the more becoming and the more indispensable. It is not that the wickedness of men can hurt him, that his throne is in any danger of being shaken by their combinations, or that his treasures may be exhausted if his subjects do not pay what they owe him; it is not from any such emotion as personal injury excites in our breast; but it is because his laws are founded in the essential difference between good and evil; because they are adapted with wisdom and goodness to the circumstances of those to whom they are given, and because the happiness of the whole rational creation depends upon the observance of them, that guilt under the divine government is followed by punishment. Hence you will observe that what divines call vindictive or punitive justice, far from deserving the opprobrious epithets with which it has been often loaded by hasty and superficial writers, belongs to the character of the Ruler of the universe, as much as any other attribute of the divine nature. For if the goodness of the lawgiver, and the excellence of his laws, do not lead men to observe them, it remains for him to vindicate their authority, and to preserve that order for the sake of which they were given, by employing the punishment of transgression as the mean of preventing the repetition of it.

This mean is employed according to the natural course when the sinner bears the punishment of his own transgression; and he can have no title to complain, although he endures the whole of that suffering which the law prescribes. In human governments, those who execute the laws seldom have much liberty of choice in the exercise of punitive justice, because they are either merely the interpreters of law, or are accountable to some higher authority; and even when they feel no such external restraint, their imperfect knowledge of the effects of their own decisions makes it appear to them safer and wiser to follow the established course. But the Almighty, who has an entire comprehension of the whole circumstances of every case, may perceive that different manners of exercising punitive justice are equally well calculated to attain the ends of punishment. As he giveth not account of his matters, he cannot be restrained by any circumstance foreign to himself from adopting that manner which appears to him best suited to the circumstances of the case; and even our understandings can discern in the situation of a guilty world the strongest reasons for departing from that method of exercising punitive justice, which lays the whole punishment of transgression upon the transgressor. For if all men are sinners, and if death, which is declared to be the punishment of sin, cannot possibly mean that those who die for their sins shall be happy hereafter, but must include the dissolution or the future misery of the sinner, it is manifest that the supreme Lawgiver, by exercising punitive justice in this manner, would have put an end to the existence of the human race, or rendered them for ever wretched; and therefore, if there is any manner by which the ends of punitive justice can be attained in a consistency with the salvation of the human race, it appears to us, judging *a priori*, that it is becoming the Almighty to adopt this manner, because in so doing he acts both as the Lawgiver of the universe, and as the Father of mankind.

In the substitution of Jesus Christ, according to the Catholic opinion, there is a translation of the guilt of the sinners to him; by which is not meant that he who was innocent became a sinner, but that what he suffered was upon account of sin. To perceive the reason for adopting

this expression, you must carry in your minds a precise notion of the meaning of the three words, sin, guilt, and punishment. Sin is the violation of law; guilt is the desert of punishment which succeeds this violation; and punishment is the suffering in consequence of this desert. When you separate suffering from guilt, it ceases to be punishment, and becomes mere calamity or affliction; and although the Almighty may be conceived, by his sovereign dominion, to have the right of laying any measure of suffering upon any being, yet suffering, even when inflicted by heaven, unless it is connected with guilt, does not attain the ends of punishment. In order, therefore, that the sufferings of the Son of God might be such as it became the Lawgiver of the universe to inflict, it was necessary that the sufferer, who had no sin of his own, should be considered and declared as taking upon him that obligation to punishment which the human race had incurred by their sins. Then his sufferings became punishment, not indeed deserved by sins of his own, but due to him as bearing the sins of others.

Although the sufferings of Jesus Christ, in consequence of this translation of guilt, became the punishment of sin, it is plain that they are not that very punishment which the sins deserved; and hence it is that they are called by those who hold the Catholic opinion, a satisfaction for the sins of the world. The word satisfaction is known in the Roman law, from which it is borrowed, to denote that method of fulfilling an obligation which may either be admitted or refused. When a person, by the non-performance of a contract, has incurred a penalty, he is entitled to a discharge of the contract, if he pays the penalty; but if, instead of paying the penalty itself, he offers something in place of it, the person who has a right to demand the penalty, may grant a discharge or not, as he sees meet. If he is satisfied with that which is offered, he will grant the discharge; if he is not satisfied, he cannot be called unjust; he may act wisely in refusing it. According to this known meaning of the word, the sufferings of Christ for sin have received the name of a satisfaction to the justice of God, because they were not the penalty that had been incurred, but were something accepted by the Lawgiver instead of it. It appears even to us incon-

sistent with the character of the Lawgiver of the universe, and many reasons in his universal government, which we are not qualified to perceive, may have rendered it in the highest degree unfit, that an act of indemnity, by which the sins of all that repent and believe are forgiven, should be published to the human race without some awful example of the punishment of transgression. It pleased God to exhibit this example in the sufferings of his own Son. By declaring that the iniquities of the whole world were laid upon this person, he transferred to him the guilt of mankind, and thus showed them, at the very time when their sins are forgiven, that no transgression of his law can escape with impunity.

It follows from the account which has been given of a satisfaction for sin, that it cannot procure the pardon of the sinner without the good will of the lawgiver, because it offers something in place of that which he was entitled to demand; and for this reason the Catholic opinion concerning the nature of the remedy brought in the Gospel, far from excluding, will be found, when rightly understood, to magnify the mercy of the Lawgiver. Those who know best how to defend it never speak of any contest between the justice and the mercy of God, because they believe that there is the most perfect harmony amongst all the divine perfections: they never think so unworthily of God as to conceive that his fury was appeased by the interposition of Jesus Christ; but they uniformly represent the scheme of our redemption as originating in the love of God the Father, who both provided and accepted that substitution, by which sinners are saved; and they hold that the forgiveness of sins is free, because although granted upon that consideration which the Lawgiver saw meet to exact, it was given to those who had no right to expect it, and who could have fulfilled their obligation to punishment only by their destruction, or their eternal misery.

One essential point in the statement of the Catholic opinion yet remains. Allowing that it became the Ruler of the universe to exhibit the righteousness of his government, by punishing transgression at the time when remission of sins was preached in the Gospel, and that we are thus able to assign the reason of that translation of guilt, without which a guilty world could not be saved, it may

still be inquired upon what principle an innocent person was made to suffer this punishment: and it is one part of the objections to the Catholic opinion, that no reason of expediency, not even mercy to the human race, can render it right or fit, that he who had done no sin should be punished as a sinner. When the Socinians are asked in what manner they can account for the sufferings of Jesus Christ, who, even in the judgment of those who lower his character to that of a peaceable mortal, must be allowed to have suffered more, although he sinned less, than other men, they resolve them into an act of dominion in the Creator, the same kind of sovereignty by which he often sends the heaviest afflictions upon the worthiest persons, and, disposing of his creatures at his pleasure, brings good out of evil. But this is an account to which those who hold the Catholic opinion cannot have recourse, because their whole system proceeds upon this principle, that the Almighty is to be considered, in every part of this transaction, not as an absolute proprietor, who does what he will with his own, but as a righteous governor, who derives the reasons of his conduct from the laws which constitute his government. In the Catholic opinion, therefore, the consent of him who endured the sufferings is conjoined with the act of the Lawgiver, who accepted them as a satisfaction for sin; and it is by the conjunction of these two circumstances, the consent of the sufferer and the acceptance of the Lawgiver, that the sufferings of Christ are essentially distinguished from all other instances of vicarious punishment.

The ordinary course of human affairs, and the Scripture history, furnish many cases in which persons suffer for the sins of others. It is part of the positive laws of many states, and of the general constitution of nature, that the effects of transgression extend beyond the lives and fortunes of those by whom it was committed, and that children, subjects, or other connexions, thus endure a larger portion of evil than it is likely they would have endured had it not been for the sins of those who went before them. You will find cases of this kind brought forward, and very much dwelt upon, even in the most masterly vindications of the Catholic opinion; but I own it appears to me, that the principles, upon which the Catholic opinion is

defended, destroy every kind of similarity between these cases and the sufferings of Christ. In all such instances of the extension of punishment, persons suffer for sins, of which they are innocent, without their consent, in consequence of a constitution under which they are born, and by a disposition of events which they probably lament; and their suffering is not supposed to have any effect in alleviating the evils incurred by those whose punishment they bear. The constitution by which punishment is thus extended has a striking similarity to the effects produced by the fall of Adam upon his posterity. It suggests a general analogy by which the second or the fourth opinion upon that subject may be vindicated; but it is wholly inapplicable to the sufferings which procured the remedy. Cases which appear to be more similar are those in which parents or friends, from affection and choice, submit to much labour and pain, by which they are able to mitigate the afflictions of others, and often to extricate them from danger or sorrow. Such cases intimate, as has been well said by Bishop Butler, that the general constitution of the universe is merciful, *i. e.* that evils, however deserved, are not left without remedy; and the generosity and willingness which bring the remedy, have been considered as suggesting an analogy favourable to that which I call the Middle opinion. But all such cases fall very far short of the Catholic opinion. For although persons in certain situations may conceive it to be their duty, or may feel an inclination to make an exertion of benevolence painful to themselves, and profitable to others; and although the enthusiasm of affection has sometimes produced a wish to bear for others all that they had deserved, yet, from the nature of the thing, there cannot be in such cases a legal substitution. No person is entitled to give a formal consent that his life shall be taken by God in place of that of another, because his own is entirely at the disposal of his Creator; and it would be presumptuous in him to offer to the Almighty to suffer the punishment of another man's sins, for every man has to bear his own iniquity, and every man may know, that if God were to enter into judgment with him, this is a load more than sufficient for him.

When you turn to human judgments, you will find nothing exactly similar to what is called a satisfaction for sin

by the sufferings of Christ; and a little attention will satisfy you that the dissimilarity is not accidental, but is founded on the nature of things. In those cases in which the penalty incurred by breach of contract is a sum of money, or a prestation that may be performed by any one, he who pays the sum, or does the service for the person originally bound, undergoes what may properly be called vicarious punishment; but he cannot be said to make satisfaction, because he does the very thing which was required, and the liberation of the pannel becomes, in consequence of such substitution, a matter of right, not of favour. In those cases in which the penalty incurred is a punishment that attaches to the person of the pannel, as imprisonment, banishment, stripes, or death, human law does not admit of substitution, because in all such cases there cannot be that concurrence of the acceptance of the Lawgiver, and the valid consent of the substitute, without which substitution is illegal. Corporal chastisement and imprisonment for a limited time are intended not only as examples to others, but as a method of reforming the vices of the criminal,—they are a medicine which must be administered, not to another, but to the patient. Perpetual imprisonment, banishment, and death, are inflicted upon those whom the law considers as incorrigible; and besides being examples, are intended to prevent the danger of any further harm being done to the community by the persons who are thus punished. But if another were punished in their stead, the danger would still exist; at least it is impossible for human government to judge how far the lesson administered by the punishment of another would correct the vice of those who deserved to have suffered it.

There was a circumstance in the practice of ancient nations, which may appear to furnish an exception to these remarks; for it is known that, in the intercourse of states, hostages were often given as a security that a treaty should be fulfilled; and that in private causes, persons called ἀντίψυχοι pledged their own lives for the lives of those who had been convicted of a capital crime. If the nation did not fulfil the contract, the hostage was put to death;—if the criminal did not appear, the surety was executed. But there are two essential points of dissimilarity between these cases and the subject of which we are now speaking.

The first is, that neither the nation nor the criminal was liberated by this vicarious suffering. The criminal was amenable to the sentence of the law, whenever he was apprehended, although the αντιψυχος had suffered; and the nation was considered as having broken the treaty, although it had sacrificed its citizen. And thus in the sufferings inflicted upon hostages and sureties, there was not that translation of guilt by which the punishment of one person takes away the obligation of another to suffer punishment. But the second point of dissimilarity is still more essential. Supposing it had been understood as a part of the law of nations, that the punishment of a hostage cancelled the obligation of a treaty; supposing it had been part of the criminal jurisprudence of any country, that one subject might be carried forth to execution in place of another who had been condemned to die, still such substitution would have been unjust: it might have expressed the sentiments of those times with regard to vicarious punishment, but it could not have reconciled that punishment with the eternal law of righteousness, because no man is entitled to consent that his life shall be given in place of the life of another. He has power to dispose of his goods and of his labour, in any way that is not contrary to the laws of God, or the regulations of the community under whose protection he lives; but he has not power to dispose of his life, which he received from his Creator, which he is bound to preserve during the pleasure of him who gave it, and of the improvement of which he has to render an account. A man, indeed, is often called to expose his life to danger in the discharge of his duty; and it is not the part either of a man or of a Christian to value life so much as, for the sake of preserving it, to decline doing what he ought to do. But that he may be warranted to make a sacrifice inconsistent with the first law of his nature, the law of self-preservation, it should be clearly marked out to him to be his duty, by circumstances not of his choosing. It is true also, that the first principles of social union give the rulers of the state a right to call forth the subjects in the most hazardous services, because a nation cannot exist unless it be defended by the members. But if, in consequence of this connexion with the community, a good citizen should not feel himself at liberty to decline

when he is sent as a hostage, and if he should be put to death because the nation from which he came did not fulfil the treaty, the illegality of the substitution would only be transferred from the individual who did his duty in obeying, to the community who took the life of a subject, not to defend the state, but to leave the state at liberty to break its faith. To the ανταψυχοι of the ancients there was not the apology of a public order. Theirs was a private act, proceeding often, it may be, from the most laudable sentiments, but exceeding the powers given to man, and upon that account invalid.

The purpose of this long deduction was to account for what might at first sight appear an objection to the Catholic opinion, that of all the instances commonly alleged as similar, there are none which can properly be called a satisfaction by vicarious punishment; and the amount of the deduction is this: The imperfect knowledge, which every human lawgiver has of the circumstances of the case, disqualifies him from judging how far the ends of punishment may be attained by substitution, so that it is wiser for him to follow the established course of justice which lays the punishment upon the transgressor: and in capital punishments the law of nature forbids substitution; because no warmth of affection, and no apprehension of utility, warrant a man voluntarily to sacrifice that life which is the gift of God to him, merely that another who deserved to die might live. For these reasons I said, that in every thing which seems to approach to a substitution amongst men, there is wanting that concurrence of the acceptance of the lawgiver, and the consent of the substitute, without which substitution is illegal. But these two circumstances meet in the substitution of Christ; and it is this peculiar concurrence which forms the complete vindication of the Catholic opinion.

Jesus Christ was capable of giving his consent to suffer and to die for the sins of men, because he had that power over his life which a mere man cannot have. Death did not come upon him by the condition of his being; but having existed from all ages in the form of God, he assumed, at a particular season, the fashion of a man, for this very cause that he might suffer and die. All the parts of his sufferings were known to him before he visited this world; he

saw the consequences of them both to mankind and to himself; and, with every circumstance fully in his view, he said unto his Father, as it is written in the volume of God's book concerning him, "Lo! I come to do thy will, O God!"* His own words mark most explicitly that he had that power over his life which a mere man has not; "No man taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myself: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again;"† and upon this power, peculiar to Jesus, depends the significancy of that expression which his Apostles use concerning him, "he gave himself for us," *i. e.* with a valid deliberate consent he acted in all that he suffered as our substitute.

It affords a favourable view of the consistency of the Catholic opinion, that the very same dignity of character, which qualified the substitute to give his consent, implies the strongest reasons for the acceptance of the Lawgiver, —the other circumstance which must concur in order to render vicarious suffering a satisfaction to justice. The support, which the human nature of Jesus received from his divine, enabled him to sustain that wrath which the Lawgiver saw meet to lay upon a person who was bearing the sins of the world. The exalted character of the sufferer exhibited to the rational creation the evil and heinousness of sin, which the Supreme Lawgiver did not choose to forgive without such a substitution; and the love of God to the human race, which led him to accept of the sufferings of a substitute, was illustrated in the most striking manner, by his not sparing for such a purpose a person so dear to him as his own Son.

These grounds of the reasonableness of the Catholic opinion, which we deduce from the character of the substitute, have no necessary connexion with some assertions which occur in many theological books. It has been said, that our sins, being committed against the infinite majesty of Heaven, deserve an infinite punishment; that none but an infinite person could pay an equivalent, and therefore that God could not pardon sin without the sufferings of his Son. This manner of speaking, which pretends to balance one infinite against another, must be unintelligi-

* Heb. x. 7. † John x. 18.

ble to finite minds; and as far as it can be understood, it appears to be unjustifiable; because it ill becomes creatures whose sphere of observation is so narrow, and whose faculties are so weak as ours, to say what God could do, or what he could not do. It has also been said, that such was the value of the sufferings of Christ, that one drop of his blood was sufficient to wash away the sins of the world. This is a manner of speaking which appears to be both presumptuous and false; because, under the semblance of magnifying the Redeemer, it ascribes cruelty and injustice to the Father in the measure of suffering which he laid upon his Son. Neither are we warranted to say, that the purpose of making an atonement for the sins of men contains the whole account of the sufferings of Christ; because there may be in this transaction what the Scriptures call a manifold wisdom to us unsearchable; reasons founded upon relations to other parts of the universe, and upon the general plan of the divine government, which we have not at present the capacity of apprehending. It is of great importance to vindicate the Catholic opinion from that appearance of presumption, which the language of some of its zealous friends has annexed to it. But such language is by no means essential to the statement of this opinion. We do not say what God could have done, or what were all the reasons for his doing what we think the Scriptures tell us he has done: but we say, that in the revelation which is given of the dignity of Jesus Christ, we discern both that he was capable of giving consent, and that he is such a substitute as it became the Lawgiver to accept.

It appears then to follow, from what has been stated, that when the sins of the penitent are forgiven upon account of the substitution of the sufferings of Christ, the authority of the divine government is as completely vindicated as if transgressors had suffered all the punishment which they deserved; at the same time, the most tender compassion is displayed to the human race, so that the Supreme Lawgiver appears both merciful and just. The harmony with which the divine perfections unite in this scheme is considered, by those who hold the Catholic opinion, as a strong internal evidence that it is the true interpretation of Scripture. For it has been often said, and

it must always be repeated when this subject is discussed, that had the Gospel been a simple declaration of forgiveness to all that repent, men would have felt that a general act of indemnity, so easily pronounced, was an encouragement to sin; and, instead of being deeply impressed with the richness of that grace from which it flowed, might have regarded it as an ordinary exertion of divine goodness, of the same rank with those bounties of Providence which are daily communicated. Whereas the preparation, the solemnity, and the expense which, according to the Catholic opinion, attended the pronouncing of this act, both enhance the value, and guard against the abuse of it. When we behold the Son of God descending from heaven, that he might bear our sins in his body on the tree, and the forgiveness of sins preached through the name of a crucified Saviour, we read in the charter which conveys our pardon, that there is a deep malignity in sin, and we learn to adore the kindness and love of God which, at such a price, brought us deliverance. All those declarations of the placability of the divine nature, which the Socinians quote in support of their system, are thus allowed by the Catholic opinion their full force. We say as they do, that the Lord God is merciful and gracious, and ready to forgive; and although we contend that pardon is dispensed only upon account of the sufferings of Christ, yet, far from thinking that the love of God is in this way obscured, we hold that this manner of dispensing pardon is the brightest display of the greatness of the divine mercy. But we claim it as the peculiar advantage of the Catholic opinion, that according to it, the display of mercy is conjoined with an exhibition of the evil of sin; and when we advance to other parts of the subject, we say further, that the remedy thus procured is dispensed and applied in a manner wisely calculated to give the most effectual check to those abuses, of which so striking an instance of the divine compassion is susceptible.

SECTION II.

We have seen that, from the nature of the thing, nothing exactly similar to vicarious punishment is to be found in the transactions of men with one another. But if vicarious punishment is the foundation of the Gospel remedy, that analogy which, from other circumstances, we know to pervade all the dispensations of religion from the beginning of the world, leads us to expect, in the previous intercourse between man and his Creator, some intimation of this method of saving sinners. As soon as we turn our attention to this subject, we are struck with the universal use of sacrifice. A worshipper, bringing an animal to be slain at the altar of his God, presents an obvious resemblance, which has been eagerly laid hold of by those who defend the doctrine of pardon by substitution; and yet you will find, that much discussion and an accurate discrimination are necessary, before any sound and clear argument in favour of that doctrine can be warrantably drawn from this general practice. For, in the first place, many of the sacrifices of the heathen were merely eucharistical expressions of gratitude for blessings received, or festivals in honour of the deity worshipped by the sacrifice, at which he was supposed to be present, and in which it was conceived by the vulgar that he partook. Even the votive and propitiatory sacrifices, *i. e.* those which expressed a wish of the worshipper, and his earnest desire to obtain the favour of the deity, may be considered as only a method of supplication, in which a solemn action accompanied the words that were used; or as a bribe, by which the worshipper, presenting what was most precious in his own sight, solicited the protection of his god.

But, in the second place, although there were sacrifices among the heathen which approached nearer to the notion of a substitution, it is not certain whether they were of divine or of human original. To some the universality and the nature of the practice taken together appear to furnish a strong presumption, or even a clear proof, that it was in the beginning commanded by God; whilst others

think, that, by attending to the state of the mind under the influence of religious emotions, and to the early mode of speaking by action, a reasonable and natural account can be given of the introduction and progress of sacrifice, without having recourse to the authority of the Creator: and there are many to whom it appears a strange method of defending a peculiar doctrine of revelation, to have recourse to a practice, which, although it originated in sentiments dictated to all men by particular situations, and might at first be innocent and expressive, is known to have degenerated in process of time, not merely into a frivolous service, but into cruel and shocking rites.

I know few subjects upon which more has been written to less purpose, than the origin of sacrifices. The only facts which are certainly known with regard to this subject are the following. No command to offer sacrifice is found in the book of Genesis. Yet Cain and Abel, the two first sons of Adam, brought offerings to the Lord, and the offering of Abel was of the firstlings of his flock.* Job, who is not supposed to have been acquainted with the books of Moses, offered burnt-offerings according to the number of his sons;† and all the nations of the earth, of whom it is at least doubtful whether their religion was derived from the Mosaic law, introduced sacrifices into the ceremonial of their worship. Now these facts are so few, and they run back into a period of which we know so little, and in which they are so naked of circumstances, that it is possible for men of ingenuity and fancy to give a plausible appearance to any kind of reasoning upon them, and thus to accommodate their opinion of the origin of sacrifices to the general system of their opinions upon other subjects.

I should go very far out of my province, if I entangled myself in the labyrinth of opinions upon this problematical subject. But there are two points, totally independent of any of the particular systems that have been formed concerning it, which it appears to me of much importance for those who defend the Catholic opinion to carry along with them. The one is, that amidst the multiplicity of heathen sacrifices, there were some in which the people

* Gen. iv. 3, 4. † Job i. 5.

understood that the victim was substituted in place of the offerer, and suffered the whole or a part of the punishment which the offerer deserved. I do not inquire into the origin of this kind of sacrifices, because whatever were the steps by which they were introduced, and whether they were the earliest or the latest sacrifices, it remains equally true that they were known and used by ancient nations, and that this is a fact of which the classics furnish the most abundant and various evidence. The anger of the gods, excited by some transgression, and signified by prodigies or calamities, was supposed to be averted by sacrifices, which for this reason were called *averrunca*, i. e. *iram divinam avertentia*. This was implied in the action of the worshipper, when he presented such sacrifices, viz. his laying his hands upon the head of the victim while he confessed his sins, and uttered the *solennia verba*: and the same thing is expressed in these words of Ovid, "hanc animam vobis pro meliore damus;"* and of Horace, "mactatâ veniet lenior hostiâ;"† and in terms often used by Livy upon such occasions, "pacem exposcere deum."‡ As the animal was supposed to bear the anger due to the offerer, it was believed that the more precious the victim, and the more nearly connected with the offerer, the gods would the more certainly be appeased. Hence arose the splendid hecatombs of which we read in Homer; and hence too the human sacrifices, and the offering of children by their own parents, of which we read amongst many nations. Thus Cæsar says of the Gauls, "pro vitâ hominum nisi vita hominis reddatur, non posse aliter Deorum immortalium numen placari arbitrantur."§ Justin says of the Carthaginians, "homines ut victimas immolabant, et impuberes—aris admovebant, pacem Deorum sanguine eorum exposcentes."‖ The following lines of Virgil show, that the idea of a victim suffering for the sins of another was familiar to the poet and his countrymen. They are put into the mouth of Sinon, who, pretending to have escaped out of the hands of the Greeks, by whom he had been destined for the altar, is brought before Priam.

* Ovid. Fast. vi. 162.
† Hor. Carm. i. 19.
‡ Liv. iii 7.
§ Cæs. De B. G. vi. 16.
‖ Justin. Hist. xviii. 6.

Nec mihi jam patriam antiquam spes ulla videndi,
Nec dulces natos exoptatumque parentem:
Quos illi fors ad poenas ob nostra reposcent
*Effugia, et culpam hanc miserorum morte piabunt.**

No words can mark more significantly the nature and the effect of vicarious suffering, than the beautiful lines in which Juvenal describes the act of the Decii, in devoting themselves to death for their country; an act which Livy had called *piaculum omnis Deorum irae.*†

Plebeiae Deciorum animae, plebeia fuerunt
Nomina: pro totis legionibus hi tamen, et pro
Omnibus auxiliis, atque omni plebe Latinâ,
Sufficiunt Dis infernis, Terraeque parenti:
Pluris enim Decii, quam qui servantur ab illis.‡

The second point which may be gathered from the heathen sacrifices, independently of any speculation with regard to the origin of sacrifice, is intimately connected with the first. It is this: as the practice of substituting a victim to bear the wrath due to the offerer was nearly universal, an idea which could not fail to become so familiar to the minds of all men was everywhere expressed, so that in the languages of all nations there are found various words which were significant of this idea, and the meaning of which evaporates if you throw it aside. Every language must be interpreted according to the sentiments and customs of those who used it. Whether these sentiments and customs be founded in nature or in prejudice, is a matter of another consideration: but since the persons amongst whom they prevailed spoke according to their views of things, we speak unintelligibly, or with a design to mislead, if we employ their words without recollecting their ideas; and when we profess to interpret ancient books, we err against the first rules of criticism, if, instead of adopting the interpretation suggested by ancient manners, we attempt to bend the words which occur there to ideas which we may believe to be right, but which we must acknowledge to be new.

* Virg. En. ii. 139.
† Liv. Hist. viii. 9.
‡ Juven. Sat. viii. 254.

It is known to every classical scholar, that in the language of the best Greek writers ἁγος denotes a crime, which was to be expiated by a sacrifice; that ἁγνιζω and ἁγιαζω, which are derived from ἁγος, denote the act of expiation; that καθαιρω, with many of its derivatives, was also applied to this effect ascribed to sacrifice; that ἱλασκω denotes the method of propitiating the gods by sacrifice; and that the force of these words, or the end conceived to be obtained by substituting something else in place of the punishment due to the offender, was expressed in Latin, by *pio, expio, lustro, purifico, placo,* and the like. All these are what we call *voces signatae, i. e.* words which, when applied to sacrifice, are appropriated to a particular idea, and they were diffused through ancient languages, by an opinion which Pliny has thus described: "Vetus priscis temporibus opinio obtinuit, februa" (an old Latin word, for which *piacula* and *piamina* came to be afterwards used,) "esse omnia, quibus malefactorum conscientiæ purgarentur, delerenturque peccata."

From the Latin words now mentioned there have been transfused into modern languages, and particularly into ours, several single words and phrases significant of this opinion; and many of the Greek words passed with the universal language of ancient Greece to the other nations, and particularly to the authors of the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament, and to the writers of the New Testament, in whose works every sound critic must understand them, unless some notice is given of a different acceptation, according to that which he knows to have been their received sense in the country from which they came.

Having gathered these two points from the sacrifices of other nations, we proceed to direct our attention to that people, whose history forms a large part of the Scriptures which Christians receive.

SECTION III.

It pleased the Almighty to select the posterity of Abraham from the surrounding tribes, and out of the son whom

he gave that venerable patriarch in his old age, to raise a nation, whom, by a succession of wonderful events, he reared and formed for himself, till they were ready to be planted in that land which his promise to Abraham had marked out as their habitation. The whole plan of their civil government, and all their religious institutions, had been prescribed in the intercourse which Moses their leader was permitted to hold with the Almighty during their long pilgrimage from Egypt to that land; and when they settled there, the minutest parts in the ceremonial of their worship were exactly conformable to the pattern which had been shown to Moses upon the mount.

Now sacrifice constitutes a very large part of this ceremonial; so that, amongst the people of Israel, the question with regard to the origin of sacrifices had no existence; and every circumstance relating to the quality of the victims, the purpose and the manner of offering them, was there regulated by the express appointment of Heaven.

It cannot be denied by any who receive the Scriptures, that the sacrifices prescribed in the law of Moses were of divine institution. But it has been said by many, that in the multiplicity of these sacrifices, there was an accommodation to that taste which the people of Israel had acquired during their long residence in Egypt, the ancient nursery of superstition; and from thence it is insinuated, that the Jewish sacrifices do not afford a sound argument in favour of any particular opinion with regard to the nature of the Gospel. The observation upon which this inference is meant to be founded may be true to a certain extent, *i. e.* we may suppose that the Almighty, who in all his dealings with his creatures remembers their infirmities, gave this people such a dispensation of religion as they were qualified to receive; and accordingly, we are accustomed to vindicate the acknowledged imperfection of the Mosaic dispensation by saying, that it was suited to the circumstances of the world in those days. But the slightest attention will satisfy you, that to say the Mosaic ritual was accommodated to the acquired taste of the people, is to assert a proposition which cannot be admitted without very great limitations. Forty years were spent in the journey from Egypt to Canaan for this declared purpose, that the whole generation who had lived in Egypt might

perish before the people were settled in their new habitation. Those whom Joshua led into Canaan were ordered to exterminate the former inhabitants, that they might not be enticed to imitate their idolatry. They were warned against inquiring how these nations had served their gods; and they were taught to regard many practices which they had left in Egypt, and which they found in the nations around Canaan, as an abomination to the Lord. "The Lord spake unto Moses saying, speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, I am the Lord your God. After the doings of the land of Egypt wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do; and after the doings of the land of Canaan whither I bring you, shall ye not do: neither shall ye walk in their ordinances. Ye shall do my judgments, and keep mine ordinances, to walk therein: I am the Lord your God."* Indeed it is impossible to read the books of Moses without feeling, that as the posterity of Abraham were, in the language of the law,† a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people, holy unto the Lord, so one great object of their ritual was to preserve them from the surrounding idolatry, by keeping their minds so much occupied with the service which the true God had appointed, as to leave them neither leisure nor inclination to go after other gods. In this view, it must appear not only unworthy of God, but inconsistent with the very end for which the nation was formed, that there should be imported into this ritual from their idolatrous neighbours any practice inconsistent with reason and justice; and we are entitled to assume it as a principle, that all those directions with regard to sacrifice which are found in the Jewish law, were agreeable to the nature and the perfections of that God by whose authority Moses delivered them to the people.

When we apply this principle in examining the Mosaic ritual, we immediately discover that a substitution of the victim for the offerer, which we had found amongst the sacrifices of all heathen nations, was there consecrated by the express appointment of God. It is not meant that all the Jewish sacrifices implied this substitution. Some, as the feast of tabernacles, were national festivals in comme-

* Levit. xviii. 1—4. † Exod. xix. 5, 6. 1 Pet. ii. 9.

moration of the blessings by which the God of Israel had distinguished his people: others, as the offerings of the first-fruits, were an acknowledgment of the returning bounties of Providence; and many of the peace-offerings and freewill-offerings mentioned in the law, were expressions of the devotion and gratitude of individuals, called forth by the particular events of their life. But in all burnt-offerings there were circumstances strongly expressive of a consciousness of guilt in the worshipper; and many of the burnt-offerings were called trespass and sin-offerings, a name which corresponds with all the ceremonies that attended them, in conveying to us this idea, that the death of the victim was instead of that death which the worshipper deserved. Of every burnt-offering of the herd the law thus speaks: "If his offering be a burnt-sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish.—And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering, and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him."* The making atonement or propitiation has precisely that notion in the law of Moses which the words appear to us to imply, viz. the turning away the wrath of God;† so that every burnt-offering of the herd implied an acknowledgment that the worshipper deserved wrath, and was an appointed method of turning it away. In the trespass-offerings and sin-offerings, the manner of turning away wrath by the substitution of a victim to bear it, is still more directly expressed; for it appears from Leviticus iv. v. vi. that the ceremonies to be observed in such offerings consisted of the following parts. The worshipper, being conscious of his sin or his trespass, brought an animal, his own property, to the door of the tabernacle. It was understood by the nature of the animal, by the manner of his bringing it, or by the words which he uttered, that he was not bringing a freewill-offering, a simple expression of gratitude and devotion, but that he was bringing an offering for the sin which he had sinned. He laid his hands upon the head of the animal, and being understood by this action to transfer to it the guilt which he had contracted, he slew it with his own hand, and then delivered it to the priest, who burnt the fat and a part of

* Levit. i. 3. † Numb. xvi. 46—48.

the animal upon the altar, and who, having employed part of the blood in sprinkling the altar, and in some cases the worshipper, poured all the rest at the bottom of the altar. And thus, says the law, "the priest shall make an atonement for him as concerning his sin, and it shall be forgiven him." The most particular directions are given with regard to the manner of disposing of the blood of all sin-offerings, and the Israelites were not permitted to eat any manner of blood: the reason of both which parts of the law is given in the following words: "I will set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people: for the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul."* The force of the reason lies here. As death was the sanction of the commandment given to Adam, so every person who transgressed any part of the law of Moses became guilty of death; for the law spoke on this wise, "the man which doth those things shall live by them;"† and therefore it followed, that he who did them not was to die in his trespass. Now, in a sin-offering, the life of an animal was presented instead of that life which the sinner had forfeited. To mark this in the most significant manner, all the blood, in which is the life of the animal, was employed in the sacrifice; and to remind the people that blood made an atonement for their souls, they were not permitted at any time to use it for food.

Sin-offerings and trespass-offerings were presented occasionally by individuals. But there was one stated day of the year, called the day of atonement, when the sin-offering was presented with peculiar solemnity for the whole congregation of Israel.‡ Upon that day, the high-priest, having first presented a bullock as a sin-offering for himself and his house, took of the congregation two goats, upon which he cast the lots; and the lot determined which of the two should be offered, and which should be sent away alive. There being no individual for whom the first was peculiarly offered, the high-priest himself presented and slew it; and then he took of the blood of both the

* Levit. xvii. 10, 11. † Gal. iii. 12. Levit xviii. 5. ‡ Levit. xvi.

bullock and the goat, and carried the blood into the holy of holies, the inmost recess of the temple, where stood the mercy-seat, which was conceived to be the residence of the God of Israel, and was distinguished by the shechinah or cloud of glory, the visible symbol of the divine presence. Into this holy place no other person ever entered; and the high-priest only upon the day of atonement. The blood which he carried with him he sprinkled upon the mercy-seat, and before the mercy-seat; and then he came out, and sprinkled it as usual upon the altar. After he had thus, by the blood of the one goat, reconciled the holy place and the tabernacle, he laid both his hands upon the head of the other goat, called the scapegoat, and confessed over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and sent him away thus bearing all their iniquities into the wilderness. What remained of the other goat and of the bullock was carried forth out of the camp, and burnt.

While the Mosaic ritual thus clearly presents, in many of its sacrifices, vicarious punishments, or an atonement for sin, by the life of an animal which the proprietor substituted, according to the appointment of the lawgiver, in place of his own life, it limits the efficacy of this substitution to certain cases marked in the law. These cases appear to me to be three. The first respects what is called in the law uncleanness, which is described in several chapters of Leviticus. It might be contracted without any fault by certain diseases, in the discharge of pious offices, by touching a dead body, and in various other ways; and it had the effect of excluding a person from joining with his countrymen in the services of the temple. If he presumed to approach while the uncleanness continued, he incurred the penalty of death; but after purifying himself by sacrifice offered in a certain manner, he was restored to the privileges of the sanctuary. The second case respects what may be called sins of ignorance. When a person unwittingly sinned in the holy things of the Lord, or did any of the things forbidden in the law, although he wist it not, he was guilty. But upon his bringing the sacrifice prescribed in Leviticus iv. v. the priest made an atonement for him concerning his ignorance wherein he

erred and wist it not; and it was forgiven him. The third case is mentioned in the beginning of Leviticus vi. It respects those sins which admit of full restitution being made to the person immediately affected by them: as when a thing is taken away by violence, or fraudulently detained from the right owner. The law ordered the person who had committed such a sin, in the first place, to restore the principal, and to add the fifth part more thereto, as a compensation for the loss or anxiety which the owner had sustained by the want of his property; and after he had by this restitution put the rights of the private party in the same state in which they were before, the law admitted him, although the sin was done with knowledge, to make an atonement by sacrifice for his trespass against the Lord. "He shall bring his trespass-offering unto the Lord: and the priest shall make an atonement for him before the Lord; and it shall be forgiven him."

The effect of sacrifice did not reach to any sin not comprehended under one of these three cases. Thus it is said in general, Numb. xv. 30, 31, "The soul that doeth ought presumptuously, because he hath despised the word of the Lord, and hath broken his commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off, his iniquity shall be upon him." And this general expression of "doing ought presumptuously" is particularly applied to two kinds of sins: *first*, to such sins as blasphemy and idolatry, which indicated a contempt of the God of Israel; *secondly*, to such sins as adultery and murder, which admit of no restitution to the injured person. Neither kind could be atoned for by any sin-offering, but were punished with death. Accordingly David, who had been guilty of both adultery and murder, does not propose to bring any sin-offering, but speaks of a broken heart, as the only sacrifice which, in such a case, could be presented.* Of murder it is said, "Blood it defileth the land; and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it."† As it sometimes happened, however, that the murderer could not be found, the land was permitted to expiate the defilement which it had contracted by a sin-

* Psalm li 17. † Numb. xxxv. 33.

offering, and the murderer was conceived to carry the guilt with him.

The detail which I have now given appeared to me necessary, in order to convey to your minds the true notion of the sin-offerings under the law of Moses. They are not to be regarded merely as emblematical of holiness; for although they certainly had a moral import, of the same kind as that which is often inculcated in the Old Testament by such expressions as these, "circumcising the heart, washing the heart from wickedness, he that hath clean hands," yet the words of the law by which the sin-offerings are appointed imply a great deal more than the emblematical lesson of holiness, which may be drawn from other parts of the ritual. Neither are they to be regarded merely as memorials of the placability of God towards those who had sinned; for had this been their only use, they would not have failed in the case of those heinous sins where the fears of conscience rendered such memorials the most necessary. But they are to be regarded as part of a constitution given by God to a particular nation; a constitution which, for wise purposes, appointed a variety of observances, which declared that whosoever continued not in all things written in the book of the law to do them was accursed and guilty of death; but which admitted in certain cases of relaxation of the punishment threatened, upon the substitution of the life of a victim slain by the offender, and delivered by him to the priest to be offered to the Lord. God dwelt amongst this people upon a mercy-seat, towards which all their worship was directed. But this mercy-seat was approached only by the high-priest, and never by him without blood, which had been shed as an atonement for the sins of the people. The method of dispensing pardon, in the cases and to the extent in which it was dispensed among this people, was by vicarious suffering; and the lawgiver, by appointing this method, gave, at the very time when he appeared merciful, an awful display of the purity of his nature, and the authority of his laws.

This example of vicarious punishment, which we have found in the Old Testament, is a sufficient answer to many of the objections against the Catholic opinion; because whatever may have been the origin of expiatory victims

amongst the heathen, the sin-offerings of the law, being part of a ritual which every Christian believes to be of divine institution, constitute an analogy in favour of the substitution of Christ, furnished by the express appointment of God. But this part of the Mosaic ritual is much more than an example, under the government of God, of somewhat strictly analogous to the substitution of Christ; for when it is considered with all the circumstances which belong to it, and all the light which it has received from inspired writers, it appears not only to vindicate the reasonableness, but to afford a conclusive argument in favour of the truth of the Catholic opinion.

SECTION IV.

The connexion between the Mosaic and the Christian dispensations may be assumed in this part of our course, because we formerly found that it forms a capital branch of the evidence of Christianity. We saw, in reviewing the deistical controversy, that the Mosaic dispensation was preparatory to the Christian; that the change was intimated by the prophets; that the time and place of the new dispensation had been exactly marked out; and that even predictions, which, when they were uttered, appeared to relate to events in which the prophets or their contemporaries had a part, received their full accomplishment in those events which constitute the character of the new dispensation.

In order to illustrate the force of that argument which those who hold the Catholic opinion derive from this connexion, it is proper to attend to the three great divisions of the Mosaic dispensation, which may be styled the moral, the political, and the ceremonial law. The moral law comprehended all those precepts, whether in the decalogue or in the books of Moses and the prophets, which, being founded in the nature of God and the nature of man, do not derive their obligation from temporary and local circumstances, but are in all situations binding upon reasonable creatures. The Socinians represent the moral law

of Moses as essentially defective, and they say that the Gospel has superinduced many new precepts. But other Christians, who entertain more honourable apprehensions of the original state of man, and who have not the same reason for taking this method of magnifying the Gospel, hold that, as morality is in its nature unchangeable, the moral precepts of every true religion must be the same; and that what the Socinians call new precepts, are only interpretations by which the great prophet, following out the true spirit of the law, vindicated the word of Moses and the prophets from those false glosses, and those absurd limitations, by which a succession of Jewish teachers had perverted their meaning. This opinion is defended at great length by a particular review of the Ten Commandments, in that chapter of the Ordinary Systems which is entitled De Decalogo. It is well illustrated in the section of Calvin's Institutes de Decalogo,—a most useful part of that valuable book. The opinion is clearly supported by the reason of the thing, by the respect with which our Lord and his apostles always speak of the moral law, and by the resemblance manifestly borne by those precepts of the Gospel, which the Socinians call new, to both the words and the spirit of the Old Testament.

The political law comprehends all those regulations which respected the civil government of the people of Israel, the decision of controversies, the private lives of the subjects, and their intercourse with one another. Although these regulations were of divine appointment, yet, being given to a particular nation, they are not binding upon any other nation, except in so far as it chooses to adopt them into the code of its own laws: and even to that nation to whom they were given, the possibility, and consequently the obligation of observing these regulations varied with circumstances. For the political liberty of the nation was abridged in their captivities, in the desolations which different conquerors spread over the country, and in their subjection to the Roman empire; and it was completely taken away when the city was razed to the ground, and the remnant who survived the calamities of those days were scattered over the face of the earth. The Jewish State, which was at first literally a theocracy, in which God acted as the immediate ruler, and which was afterwards admin-

istered by judges, then by kings, then by princes or governors dependent upon other nations, has long ceased to be. The Jews, although separated by many of their customs from the people amongst whom they live, nowhere exist as a nation: it is said that they have lost that distinction of tribes which was an essential part of their civil constitution: and the Almighty, as if to show that the purpose for which he gave this singular constitution has been accomplished, has continued them above 1700 years in a situation which renders the observance of their political law impracticable.

The ceremonial law comprehends all those directions concerning the method of approaching the God of Israel, from which the Mosaic dispensation derives its peculiar character as a religious institution, and in particular the various sacrifices ordained by Moses, of which we have found sin-offerings to form a large part. But the regulations which constitute the ceremonial law had respect to particular seasons of the year, to a particular place, and to a particular succession of men, by whom many of the services were to be performed, and through whose hands all the sacrifices were to pass; and therefore, in the present situation of the Jews, when it is impossible for them to assemble at the prescribed season, or in the place which God chose, and when the order of priesthood is lost in the confusion of tribes, the ceremonial law cannot be observed.

From this review of the three great divisions of the Mosaic dispensation, it appears that the ceremonial law, like the political, is in this respect essentially distinguished from the moral,—that it has a precarious temporary existence. The moral law is always the same. But the ceremonial law was not given till after the world had existed more than two thousand years,—it was then given to only a particular people,—and the present situation of that people, which has put an end to their political law, renders it impossible to observe the ceremonial. Unless then we say, that there was no true religion in the world before the days of Moses, which the Jews, who boast of their descent from Abraham, will not say; and unless we say also, that there has been no true religion in the world since the destruction of Jerusalem, which no Christian will

say; we must admit that the ceremonial law is not essential to the worship of God, but consists of positive institutions, which however wisely they may have been adapted to particular circumstances, have nothing in their nature inconsistent with change or repeal.

Thus the precarious nature of the ceremonial law is incontrovertibly established by that expiration of this law, which is a matter of fact arising necessarily from the present circumstances of the nation to whom the law was given. But this fact cannot be regarded as an unexpected consequence of the fortune of war, for it is the fulfilment of prophecies contained in the sacred books of that nation. All those intimations of a new covenant, which constitute part of the evidence of Christianity, point to the abolition of the ceremonial law. They speak of a time when the ark of the covenant shall no more be remembered nor visited,* when there shall be an altar to the Lord in the midst of Egypt,† when in every place pure incense shall be offered,‡ and God will take priests out of all nations:§ and it is declared, that sacrifice, although the most solemn and essential part of the ceremonial, was not to remain after this change of dispensation; for the prophets not only explain to the people, that sacrifices were in the sight of God of very inferior value to the observance of the moral law, and that when separated from obedience, or offered with the view of obtaining a license to sin, they were an abomination to the Lord; but they also foretell, that at the coming of that person who was to bring in the new covenant sacrifice was to cease. The cessation of sacrifice is intimated in a part of Psalm xl. which we have learned from the epistle to the Hebrews to consider as spoken by the Messiah: "Burnt-offering and sin-offering thou hast not required. Then said I, lo! I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God." There are many passages, both of the evangelical prophet Isaiah, and of the later prophets, which are most fitly interpreted of this event; and it is explicitly declared by the prophet Daniel, who, after marking precisely the time at which the Messiah was to be cut off,

* Jer. iii. 16.
† Isaiah xix. 19.
‡ Mal. i. 11.
§ Isaiah lxvi. 21.

adds these words, "and he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease."* It is further to be remarked, that the same prophets who foretell the cessation of sacrifice intimate that the person, at whose coming it was to cease, would assume a character and perform actions fitted to supply the place of it. David calls him a priest;† Isaiah says that he shall "make his soul an offering for sin;"‡ and Daniel, who says that the Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself, represents him as making an end of sins, making reconciliation for iniquity, and bringing in everlasting righteousness at the time when, by causing the sacrifice and oblation to cease, he seals up the vision and the prophecy.§

In this manner the general connexion between the two dispensations is particularly applied to the ceremonial law, and we seem to be warranted by the language of the Old Testament to expect, that this very large part of the Mosaic institution did not merely go before the Gospel, but that it has some peculiar relation to the remedy which the Gospel brings. When we recollect that in all the works of God things are set over against one another, linked together by various relations, the discovery of which brings to our knowledge a fitness and perfection of design, it appears to be agreeable to our experience, as well as our ideas of the divine wisdom, that when the Almighty employed one religion to be introductory to another, he should bind them in the most intimate manner, by making the ceremonial, which was characteristical of the former religion, a figure and representation of the nature of that religion at whose coming it was to cease. And when we recollect further, that many of the prophecies which primarily respected David, Solomon, Cyrus, and other personages under the Old Testament, received an ultimate and complete accomplishment in Jesus Christ, it may occur to us as a thing analogous to this secondary sense of prophecy, that the sacrifices in the ceremonial law were intended as types and emblems of the sacrifice on the cross. It is manifest that by this kind of connexion the ceremonial law, besides accomplishing the purpose for

* Dan. ix. 27.
† Psalm cx. 4.
‡ Isaiah liii. 10.
§ Dan. ix. 24, 26.

which it was immediately given, becomes in an eminent degree subservient to that religion which is the end of the law: and the Gospel, in addition to all the evidences of a divine original which it brings with itself, derives much importance, in the eyes of every devout observer, from its being so literally the fulfilment of a former dispensation. It is not a sound argument against the reality of this kind of connexion, that the typical use of the ceremonial law was not distinctly perceived by the ancient Jews. For in all subjects, the nature and the extent of the general plan of Divine providence keeps long in the dark many points which are afterwards brought to light. The knowledge of one period of life, of one state of society, of one age of the world, although sufficient for every purpose which is then of real importance, is afterwards found to have been incomplete, and our minds are enlarged and delighted by discovering properties and uses of objects, not inconsistent certainly with the ends to which they had been applied, but of which even those who thought they understood the objects best had hardly formed any conception. Had the ancient Jews clearly understood that the dispensation under which they lived was subservient in all its parts to another, their respect for it must have been diminished. But it was necessary that their attachment to the rudiments of faith should be preserved entire till the faith was ready to be revealed; and therefore the hints of the new covenant, given from the earliest times, and gradually explained as the season of its manifestation drew near, although sufficient to produce and to cherish amongst that people the expectation of a Messiah, were not enough to create any degree of contempt, or even indifference, for the institutions of their own law.

The foregoing speculations seem to render it not improbable, that the ceremonial law of Moses and the dispensation of the Gospel have that intimate kind of connexion, which consists in the former being emblematical of the latter; and these speculations are beautifully illustrated and confirmed, by attending to the manner in which the New Testament gradually unfolds this typical nature of the Jewish ceremonies. The later prophets, we have seen, had announced that sacrifice was to cease, and had

said that the Messiah was to make his soul an offering for sin, and to make an end of sins. Accordingly, no sooner did Jesus appear in public, than John, the forerunner of the Messiah, marked him out by these words, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world;"* thus directly applying to Jesus as his character, what Isaiah had used as a simile, "he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter."† After Jesus had, by his public discourses, by his private intercourse with his disciples, and by the succession of miracles which they beheld, confirmed their attachment, and obtained a declaration of their faith in him as the Christ, he spake to them privately of his sufferings. Afterwards he said to them more plainly, "The Son of Man came to give his life a ransom for many."‡ At the last supper which he ate with his disciples before he suffered, he spoke of his blood being shed for many for the remission of sins; and upon that occasion he intimated, both by action and by words, the connexion between his sufferings and the Jewish sacrifices. On the first day of unleavened bread, when the law required the passover to be killed, he sat down with his disciples at the domestic feast, which every master of a family in Israel was then holding; and before he arose from the feast he instituted the memorial of his death.§ This circumstance naturally led his disciples to connect that event with the passover which they were eating; and this inference was confirmed by that significant expression uttered by Jesus while he was sitting with them, the full import of which we now understand, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer; for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God;" *i. e.* the event which is to happen this night is the fulfilment of the passover.

Whether the apostles entered into the meaning of this expression at the time of its being uttered, we know not. For the divine wisdom, which guided the minutest actions of our Lord's life, restrained him from disclosing to them hastily the typical nature of the Jewish ritual. As according to the flesh he came of David, and was thus born un-

* John i. 29.
† Isaiah liii. 7.
‡ Matt. xx. 28.
§ Luke xxii. 14—20.

der the law, it was part of his entire obedience to the will of God, to comply in all things with the law of Moses; and the principle of his compliance was thus expressed by himself, when John the Baptist discovered a surprise at his coming to be baptized by him, "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."* There would have been an unfitness in his appearing to disparage that ceremonial, which continued in force till his death, while he was daily observing it. But in the interval between his resurrection and his ascension, after he had fulfilled the passover by dying on the cross, he showed, by an interpretation of all the hints which he had given during his life, in what sense he was the end of the law. "These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me."† He had been accustomed while he was with them to apply to himself many expressions in the ancient Scriptures of the Jews; but now "he opened their understandings that they might understand the Scriptures; and beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." Accordingly his apostles who heard this discourse, and Paul, who was enlightened by a special revelation, appear in the book of Acts building their preaching of the Gospel upon this foundation, that they said "none other things than those which Moses and the prophets did say should come, that Christ should suffer, and that he should be first that should rise from the dead."‡

Now, although the prophets foretell that Christ should suffer, there is not in the books of Moses, after the original promise respecting the seed of the woman, any prediction that the Shiloh, the Prophet, the Star out of Jacob there foretold, was to suffer; and we are at a loss to conceive how any thing in these books can be considered as an intimation of the sufferings of the Messiah, except the types that are to be found in the sacrifices of the law. It seems natural, therefore, to presume, that our Lord upon that occasion, when he opened the understandings of his dis-

* Matt. iii. 15. † Luke xxiv. 27, 44, 45. ‡ Acts xxvi. 22, 23.

ciples, that they might understand the Scriptures, explained to them these types, and that from thence they learned to speak, as they do, of the typical nature of the Jewish sacrifices.

John the Evangelist, in relating the circumstances of our Lord's death, introduces the last word which he uttered, τετελεσται, "it is finished," in a manner which shows that he referred it to the fulfilment of the Scriptures: and having mentioned, that when the soldiers came to Jesus they did not break his legs, as they had broken the legs of those who were crucified with him, the Evangelist leads us back to a direction given about the paschal lamb, "For these things were done that the Scriptures should be fulfilled; a bone of him shall not be broken."* The Apostle Paul says in one place, "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:"† in another place, "Christ gave himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet swelling savour."‡ He says that the law was a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ; that Christ is the end of the law; that the meats, and drinks, and washings under the law, were a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ:§ and by all these incidental expressions he has prepared us for that full account of this matter which we receive in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

It appears from several circumstances, that the Epistle to the Hebrews was written a few years before the destruction of Jerusalem; an event which of necessity put an end to the ceremonial law, by rendering the observance of that law impracticable. The epistle is addressed to the Hebrews, *i. e.* natural-born Jews, who had been educated in reverence for the law, who had suffered persecution from their countrymen for having embraced Christianity, and who, after they had resisted this fiery trial, were assailed by reasoning. The unbelieving Jews represented the Gospel as an innovation upon a system which was confessedly of divine original, a presumptuous attempt to supersede the law which the God of Israel, in terrible majesty, gave by Moses, and an insult to the wisdom and piety with which their ancestors had cherished the national

* John xix. 26—37. † 1 Cor. v. 7. ‡ Ephes. v. 2.
§ Gal. iii. 24. Rom. x. 4. Col. ii. 16, 17.

faith. For many years after the ascension of Jesus, his apostles had shown much tenderness to the prejudices of the Jews. But as the destruction of Jerusalem approached, they found less occasion for reserve in arguing against these prejudices. There was no unfitness in explaining the precarious subordinate nature of the Mosaic system, when the whole fabric was just about being dissolved; and it pleased God, in the reply which the apostle to the Hebrews enabled the Christian Jews to give to the arguments of their adversaries, to furnish Christians in all ages with a most instructive view of the continuity of the two dispensations; a view which, while it opens many circumstances respecting the use of the law of Moses, implied indeed in other parts of Scripture, but nowhere else so clearly taught, assists us in deriving from the connexion between the Law and the Gospel the fullest illustration of the truth of that opinion concerning the nature of the Gospel remedy, which considers the death of Christ as a vicarious sacrifice for sin.

The plan of the first ten chapters of the Epistle to the Hebrews may be thus shortly delineated—The Apostle begins with unfolding the dignity of that Person by whom the Gospel was given; the glory which originally belonged to him, as the Son of God, and the Creator of the world; and the honour with which he is now crowned, after having accomplished that gracious purpose, in the conduct of which he appeared, for a little, lower than the angels. A message brought by this exalted Person claims particular attention: Moses was faithful as a servant, but Christ comes as a Son over his own house; and all the instances in which the blessings of the Mosaic dispensation were forfeited by unbelief, and disobedience to the word spoken by angels received punishment, are lessons of reverence and attention to the word spoken by Him, who has a name that is above every name. The appearance of this messenger was not unexpected, for God had declared of old times in the law, that he was ordained to the office which he undertook. The same dispensation which established the Levitical priesthood spoke of a time when that priesthood was to be changed; and taught those who submitted to it to look for one who was to arise, not according to the lineal succession of the house

of Aaron, but who pertained to the tribe of Judah, a tribe which had never given attendance at the altar, and who was called after another order. This new order is named the order of Melchisedek, because in the book of Genesis a person of this name is mentioned, who, being king of Salem, and a priest of the most High God, received tithes of Abraham. He was a priest therefore in the days of Abraham, the great-grandfather of Levi. But as the house of Aaron, and the whole tribe of Levi were descended from Abraham, it was not possible to give any more express intimation of a change of that priesthood which was after the order of Aaron, than by declaring, that the new priest was after the order of Melchisedek, a priest whose descent, although left in such perfect obscurity by Scripture, that he is said to be "without father, without mother, without descent," could not possibly be counted from Levi, because his office existed in the days of Abraham, that illustrious progenitor to whom the Jews traced back all the privileges of their nation.

While intimation was thus given in the law itself of a complete change of the Levitical priesthood, no change or succession was spoken of in the new order; but it was declared and confirmed by an oath, that the person who should arise after the order of Melchisedek was to be a priest for ever. In this respect, therefore, he was manifestly superior to all the priests who had been called after the order of Aaron, that while the individuals were not suffered to continue, by reason of death, and the whole order was at length to be abolished, he had an unchangeable priesthood: and he was superior to them in this further respect, that all their ministrations, and all the appurtenances of divine service which they used, were only shadows and faint images of the manner in which he was to exercise his office. The tabernacle of Moses was indeed made according to a pattern showed to him by God in the mount; but the heavenly things to be accomplished by the unchangeable priesthood, having been ordained by God from the beginning, were in his contemplation at the time when the pattern was shown; and the tabernacle, formed in the intermediate space according to that pattern, was only an example and shadow of these heavenly things.

Such is a general view of the argument in the first ten chapters of the Epistle to the Hebrews, containing a complete answer to the reasonings of the unbelieving Jews. They said that the Gospel was an innovation upon the Mosaic system, a presumptuous attempt to supersede the revelation given to their fathers; and therefore, that it became every person who believed in the divine institution of the law of Moses, without examining the contents of the new faith, instantly to reject its claim. But the apostle shows that the Gospel was given by a glorious Personage, superior to all the former messengers of heaven; a personage whose appearance had been announced in the law of Moses, whose office as a priest had been there declared to be unchangeable, and whose actions in fulfilling that office were shadowed forth and prefigured by all the institutions of the law. Far therefore from there being any impiety to the God of Israel, any derogation from the respect due to Moses, any apostasy from the Jewish religion, in embracing the Gospel, it was the duty of every obedient and intelligent disciple of Moses to receive him who is the end of the law.

That branch of the argument, in which the apostle represents the sacrifices of the law of Moses as figures and shadows of the sacrifice on the cross, deserves particular attention. The following passages of the Epistle will sufficiently exhibit it:—Heb. viii. 5. Δειγμα is a part taken from a thing as a method of showing the rest. Its compound ὑποδειγμα, in this verse, is a more obscure method of showing; not a specimen but a figure. Σκια presents the outlines of the body from which it proceeds. Τυπος is a mark made upon an object by striking it; an impression; John xx. 25, τον τυπον των ηλων; hence the likeness of the striking body which remains in the body struck; in general, a figure or representation.

Heb. ix. 9—14.—9, παραβολη, *collocatio*, placing two things by the side of one another, in order to observe their points of resemblance and dissimilitude; such a representation of the things that were to come, as it was proper for persons living in that time to have before them.—10. "Carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation;" *i. e.* ordinances which had the effect of making a person righteous before God, in respect of the flesh,

but did not reach the conscience, lying upon them, imposed, till the fit season of making things right by another covenant.—11. " A tabernacle not made with hands ;" *i. e.* not in the manner in which the tent of Moses was made. This is a circumlocution by which the apostle gives notice that he is using the phrase figuratively for the body of Christ.—13. The water of separation, mentioned Numbers xix., was thus obtained. A red heifer was killed and burnt; the ashes were gathered and kept in a clean place; and some of the ashes were put into a vessel and running water was added to them. A bunch of hyssop dipped in this water was employed to sprinkle every person, who upon any account had touched a dead body, before he was permitted to approach the tabernacle. Every thing that was separated from other uses for the service of God was by that separation holy. Every thing that was employed for the ordinary purposes of life was, by this common use, unfit for the service of God. Hence κοινος, impure; κοινοω, *polluo.* The sprinkling with hyssop did not make the person a better man than he was, or obtain remission of his sins: it only removed that accidental defilement, or unfitness for the service of God which he had contracted. —14. δια του Πνευματος αιωνιου. The Holy Ghost is represented throughout the New Testament as having a part in all the actions of our Lord;—as given to him without measure,—and as descending upon him at his baptism. It is said that our Lord was led by the Spirit,—that by the Spirit of God he did mighty works,—that he was raised, quickened, justified by the Spirit. So here the Spirit supported him in his sacrifice on the cross. Every victim was required by the law to be blameless. He was without sin. The water of separation purified from the touch of a dead man. His offering purified from dead works, or those sins which defile the conscience.

Heb. ix. 21—24. λειτουργια, public service.—22. σχεδον, " Almost all things are by the law purged with blood." Poor persons were allowed, upon some occasions, to bring offerings in which no animal was slain. χωρις, referring to that expression in the law. " Blood maketh atonement for the soul."—24. αντιτυπα in 1 Pet. iii. 21, means what we call the antitype: here, the type or impression representing another thing.

Heb. x. 11—18.—In this passage the apostle argues from the nature of the offerings under the law, and from the daily repetition of them, that they did not take away sin; and he quotes the ancient Scriptures, which promised forgiveness of sin as one of the blessings of the new covenant, in proof of the perfection of the sacrifice offered under that covenant.

The passages above referred to suggest the following remarks, which are so clearly grounded upon the words and the reasonings of the apostle, that I think it enough barely to mention them without adding any illustration. 1. The apostle ascribes a certain effect to the Jewish sacrifices, which he calls purifying the flesh, and which we find it easy to interpret by our knowledge of the Mosaic law. 2. This effect was attained by the shedding the blood of those victims which were offered day by day, and year by year, according to the commandment of God, and by the priests sprinkling the blood upon the altar. 3. An effect of a very superior kind is said to be attained under the Gospel, which the apostle calls purifying the conscience, making the worshippers perfect, and which he explains by the remission of sins. 4. In describing these two effects, he uses the two words καθαρίζω and ἁγιάζω, which in the language of ancient Greece, denoted what we call expiation by sacrifice. 5. Agreeably to this received meaning of these words, he represents the superior effect as attained by the one sacrifice for sins, which the High Priest of our profession offered, when he gave his body on the cross once for all; and by his carrying his own blood into heaven. 6. And he represents the manner of attaining the inferior effect, as intended by God to be a shadow, a figure, a type of that manner of attaining the superior effect which had from the beginning entered into the counsels of heaven, and with a view to which all the services that pertained to the inferior effect had been established according to the pattern shown to Moses.

When we lay these parts of the apostle's argument together, this conclusion seems clearly to follow, that in his apprehension the offering of Christ upon the cross was a true sacrifice for sin, which has as real an influence in procuring the forgiveness of sin, and so relieving the conscience from a sense of guilt, as the sacrifices under the

law had in removing those legal defilements which rendered men unfit to approach the tabernacle.

As this conclusion is the most direct confirmation of the Catholic opinion, the Socinians have employed all their ingenuity to evade the necessity of drawing it; and their reasonings upon this subject, as far as I have been able to collect them, may be reduced to the two following heads:

1. They say that the whole language and reasoning of the apostle to the Hebrews is merely an allusion to Jewish customs; that it was natural for an apostle of Jesus, who had been bred at the feet of Gamaliel, to endeavour to avail himself of the education, in which he tells us he had profited above his equals, in order to do honour to the new faith which he had embraced; that in all his writings Paul discovers a propensity to use bold figures of speech, and that there was a peculiar propriety in the figure which pervades this Epistle, because it tended to magnify the religion of Jesus in the eyes of those to whom he was writing. Men, who had been accustomed to reverence the splendour of the Mosaic institution, could not instantly be reconciled to the simplicity and spirituality of the faith of Christ. The apostle, therefore, decking out the Gospel in trappings borrowed from the law, presents to the Hebrews, a sacrifice, a tabernacle, and a High Priest; and although he knew that the only effect of the death of Christ is to furnish motives for that repentance, the consequence of which is forgiveness, he accommodates the sacrificial terms of the law to give this effect a more venerable appearance. The prejudices of the Jews were soothed by this accommodation; but it was not intended for other Christians; and we miss the design of a writer, whose principle it was to become all things to all men, if we form our notions of the Gospel from a manner of expressing himself, which condescension to persons of a particular denomination led him to assume.

This account of the Epistle to the Hebrews cannot proceed from persons who entertain an exalted idea of the inspiration of Scripture. It is indeed inconsistent with the lowest degree of inspiration which can be supposed necessary to render the Scriptures a safe guide into all truth. The account is incorrect in representing this view of the connexion between the sacrifices of the law and the

67999

sacrifice of the cross as peculiar to the Epistle to the Hebrews; for although particular circumstances led the writer of that epistle to give a fuller illustration of the subject than is elsewhere to be found, yet we discover traces of the same connexion, both in the law itself, and in different places of the New Testament; and there is not the smallest inconsistency between all that is said by this writer and any thing that is said in any other part of Scripture. The account is dishonourable to this writer, because it represents him as arguing falsely, and using both words and reasonings with an intention to mislead.

You will be satisfied of the dishonour which this account does to the writer of the epistle, if you attend to the following circumstances:—

(1.) The words καθαιρω and ἁγιαζω, which had a received meaning in the sacrifices of those nations to whose language they belong, are applied by the apostle, according to that sense, to the sacrifices under the law; and in the same discourse they are applied to the effects of the death of Christ. But there cannot be a greater abuse of figurative language than to employ words, first literally, then metaphorically, and in the progress of a long argument often to alternate the literal and the metaphorical sense of them, without giving any notice of the change.

(2.) But the purport of the apostle's argument does not admit of our understanding these words metaphorically. Whatever were the motives which led the apostle to argue in this manner, it is unquestionably the purport of his argument to show, that Christ is a High Priest, that his death was an offering, and that this offering attained the end of sacrifice. Now, such an argument requires the use of the words καθαιρω and ἁγιαζω, not in a metaphorical, but in the literal sense; for if these words apply to the sacrifices of the law literally, and to the sacrifice of Christ metaphorically, then the whole argument is a sophism, and the apostle is guilty of something much worse than an abuse of figures, he is a false reasoner.

(3.) The apostle says expressly that the sacrifices under the law were shadows, figures, types of the true sacrifice of the cross; *i. e.* instead of applying the words καθαιρω and ἁγιαζω, in allusion to the law, he maintains that the truth of the terms is found under the Gospel, and that the law

was an allusion to this truth. You will observe, that as a shadow must present the outlines of the body from which it proceeds, as a τυπος, in the primary sense of that word, must express the figure of that body by the stroke of which it was formed; so in the use which we are accustomed to make of the words type and antitype, there must be a resemblance between them, because it is by means of this resemblance that the one thing becomes the type of the other. What we call a symbol is an arbitrary sign of something past or present, whose meaning depends upon invention; and we understand that any one thing may be made the sign of another, as sounds of thought, and written characters of sounds. But what we call a type is a sign of something future, whose nature is expressive of the thing typified; and there could be no connexion between the two, if the thing typified were destitute of that which is characteristical of the type. Hence, when we say the Jewish sacrifices were typical of the Messiah, we mean by the use of the word typical, that their nature somehow corresponded to the design of his coming. Had they attained the end of sacrifice completely, there would have been no need for his becoming a sacrifice; had they not attained it in any measure, they would not have been types of his sacrifice; but by purifying the flesh, *i. e.* rendering it lawful and safe for persons to approach the tabernacle, who, from legal uncleanness, or sins of ignorance, could not have approached it without death, and yet leaving the consciences of the worshippers in the same state as before, they were in their nature fitted to typify, *i. e.* to exhibit by an imperfect resemblance, that sacrifice which relieves the conscience, and by which "all that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses." The logical propriety of terms, therefore, requires that we ascribe a certain effect to the Jewish sacrifices, and that we ascribe a higher effect of the same kind to the sacrifice of the cross. But this is the very thing which the apostle does; for we found, by an analysis of his argument, that he speaks of both effects as real. And thus, if we only give the words καθαιρω and ἁγιαζω in his discourse the same interpretation which we are accustomed to give them in the writings of the ancient Greeks, he appears to be strictly accurate in the use of

the term τυπος; whereas, if we give these two words a new interpretation, by which we make him guilty of an abuse of figurative language, and a kind of false reasoning, we also fix upon him the absurdity, that he calls one thing a type of another, although the thing typified wants that which is characteristical of the type; so that the type mentioned by the apostle, instead of being an imperfect representation, has more than the antitype: and the things to which these names are applied have not that resemblance in kind, without which the names have no meaning.

(4.) To all that has been said, it must be added, in the last place, that the apostle is not here handling an argument, but he is addressing a great body of people, converted from Judaism to Christianity; and he professes to relieve their minds from the apprehension of impiety in forsaking the law of Moses, by stating, that all the sacrifices which had been offered for ages according to the law were superseded by that one sacrifice on the cross, which, being the truth shadowed forth by them, rendered further offering unnecessary. The argument was most satisfying to those Jews who received it upon the authority of the apostle. But if he only spoke in accommodation to their prejudices, he dealt unfairly with them; because whenever they discovered, by their intercourse with other Christians, that the death of Christ was in reality no sacrifice, the scruples which the apostle had professed to remove would naturally revive; and since he had assumed it as a principle, that without shedding blood there is no remission of sins, it would appear to them their safest course to return to that religion, in which they certainly knew that blood made an atonement for the soul.

This last reason is stated in its full force in a passage of this Epistle, xiii. 9—14; in reading which it must be remembered, that the ceremonies of the law were familiar to the persons whom the apostle is addressing; that he combats teachers who endeavoured to draw them back from the simplicity of the Gospel to the observance of these ceremonies; and that his epistle was written about eight years before the destruction of Jerusalem.

From these four reasons it seems to follow, that, unless we hold the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews to be both an inconclusive and a sophistical reasoner, we cannot

admit the first position, by which the Socinians endeavour to evade the argument in favour of the Catholic opinion drawn from that Epistle: but we must consider the manner in which the Jewish sacrifices are there spoken of as involving this principle, that the offering on the cross did efficaciously take away sin by the substitution of a victim for the sinner.

2. But if it should be found impossible to resolve the reasoning of the apostle into a bare accommodation to Jewish customs, or a moral lesson,—if there must be something substantial in that which the Mosaic ritual shadowed forth, a second position is adopted by those who deny the truth of the Catholic opinion. It is the refuge to which the early followers of Socinus betook themselves, in order to evade the reality of the sacrifice of the cross; and it coincides with that which I called the Middle opinion concerning the nature of the Gospel remedy.

They said that under the law the priest made the atonement; that it was not the victim, which was of little value, and was slain by the offerer himself, but the oblation of the victim by the priest, which procured forgiveness; and that on the great day of atonement, the most important part of the ceremony was the high priest entering into the holy of holies, and appearing before the mercy-seat for the people. They learned from the Epistle to the Hebrews, that these typical parts of the law were fulfilled by the priesthood of Christ; they found the apostle stating the superior excellence of his priesthood as consisting in this, that he went not into the holy place made with hands, but into the true holy place, *i. e.* heaven, there to appear in the presence of God for us; and they understood the apostle as saying that it is his entering there which makes him a priest; for so they interpreted these words, Heb. viii. 4, "If he were on earth he should not be a priest." Upon these grounds they conceived that the priesthood of Christ commenced when he ascended to heaven, and that he is said to be a priest for ever upon this account only, because he continues without intermission, through his power and favour with God, to take away the guilt of our sins. The amount, then, of the second position is, that Christ was not truly a priest, and that he did not offer any real sacrifice while he was upon earth; but that his suffer-

ings were merely a preparation for his priesthood which is exercised in heaven.

The imperfection of this system is obvious to any person who carries the whole subject in his mind. The priests indeed made atonement, but it was by the blood of the victim which had been slain. The high priest entered in once a year into the holy place, but it was with the blood of the goat and the bullock, both of which he had on that day slain with his own hand; and he reconciled the holy place by sprinkling it with the blood. "Every high priest taken from among men," says the apostle, Heb. viii. 3, 4, "is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sin; wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer." Jesus then performed the office of a priest in offering a sacrifice, but he did not complete the office by that act; for, in order to fulfil the types of the law, it was necessary that he should carry the blood which he had offered into the holy place. Upon this account he went into heaven; and this is the meaning of these words of the apostle, "If he were on earth he should not be a priest," *i. e.* if he had remained on earth after his sacrifice, no part of his actions would have corresponded to the entrance of the high priest into the holy place. But his appearance in heaven is stated, in various places of the Epistle, as subsequent to his sacrifice, and as deriving its efficacy from the blood which he has carried thither. We are led to consider him as completely a priest, because there are in his case both the mactation and the oblation of a victim: and the nature of the victim is conjoined with the place where it continues to be presented to God, in all the views of the excellence of his priesthood.

Thus, according to our interpretation of the apostle's reasoning, every part of the Mosaic ritual finds its accomplishment in the priesthood of Christ: and the analogy between the two dispensations is so entire and so exact, that we are satisfied of the truth of the whole reasoning. According to that system which is adopted in the second position, a large portion of the ceremonial of Jewish sacrifice has no counterpart under the Gospel: Jesus bears the name of a priest without having done what is characteristical of that office; and that method of procuring the

blessings of the Gospel, which the Scriptures reveal, is confounded with the power and the tenderness which the High Priest of our profession exhibits in dispensing them.

SECTION V.

THE argument upon which we have dwelt so largely appears to me conclusive. But it is not desirable that so important an article of our faith as that which the Catholic opinion involves, should rest upon a single view of the subject, or upon the pertinency of a particular kind of phraseology; and therefore, in order to show that this opinion is unquestionably the doctrine of Scripture, and that the phrases employed in stating it, although not used by the inspired writers, are clearly warranted by the revelation which they have given, it is proper to take a more enlarged survey of the language and the views upon this subject which the Scriptures present. We shall meet in this survey with some of the sacrificial terms which we have lately been considering; but if we find that, even when a resemblance to the Jewish ritual was not the leading idea, the amount of what the inspired writers say concerning the Gospel remedy is perfectly agreeable to the Catholic opinion, we may rest without hesitation in the conclusion which they taught us to draw from that resemblance.

It is known to those who search the Scriptures, that the discourses of our Lord and the writings of his apostles abound with allusions to passages in the Old Testament, even when no express quotation is made; and therefore it is not surprising to find in one passage the ground-work of all that we read in the New Testament concerning the doctrine of atonement. That passage is Isaiah liii. The prophet, in many places of his book, blends with the description of the Messiah's kingdom events of his own time, as types of that glorious period; but in this chapter he appears to have lost sight of every inferior personage, and

his mind is completely occupied with the illustrious deliverer that was to come to Zion; particularly with the nature, the character, and the effects of his sufferings. The ancient Jews understood this chapter to refer to the Messiah, although they certainly did not enter into the true meaning of all the parts of it. But to us it is interpreted by the manner in which the writers of the New Testament relate those events which the prophet there foretold; and when we avail ourselves of the light which his prediction and their commentary throw upon one another, we are enabled to arrange that support which the Catholic opinion derives from the general language and the views of Scripture, under the three following heads:—the bitterness of the sufferings of Christ taken in conjunction with the innocence and dignity of the sufferer;—the character uniformly given of his sufferings as a punishment for sin;—and the various descriptions of the effects of this punishment. These three points, collected from Scripture in one complex view, constitute the evidence, that the doctrine of pardon by the substitution of the sufferings of Christ in place of the punishment due to sinners is the doctrine of Scripture.

1. The first point to be attended to is what may be called the value of the sufferings of Christ; because had they been of little value, they could not have answered that purpose which is assigned to them in the Catholic opinion. I need not particularly quote the well-known texts of Scripture, which place this value in the bitterness of the sufferings cheerfully undergone by an innocent and exalted person. The whole history of his life is a commentary upon the significant words of the prophet, "He is a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;" for he was not a stranger to any kind of affliction, and, in the hour of his greatest distress, every alleviation was removed from him. To the meanness of his condition, the scorn and persecution of his enemies, the pains of his body, and all the visible circumstances by which death to him was aggravated, there falls to be added what the New Testament calls an agony, which is described, Mark xiv. 33, 34; Luke xxii. 41—44; John xii. 27. In these passages we meet with the following terms, γενομενος εν αγωνια; ψυχη μου τεταραχται; περιλυπος εως θανατου; εκθαμβεισθαι, to be

amazed, or in that state of mind which we express by the word horror; to be astonished, stupified with grief; to lose for a little the power of exercising the mind; ἀδημονεῖν, *extra populi consortium degere, hominum vestigia vitare*, to have the mind stupified and absorbed in its own feelings. The expressions used by the historians paint the utmost distress of mind, during which the human nature of Jesus shrunk at the prospect that lay before him; and the apostle to the Hebrews manifestly refers to their description when he says, Heb. v. 7, "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears——" Those who consider Jesus as merely a man, and who by consequence must consider his sufferings as no atonement for sin, find it impossible to give a reasonable account why, in the prospect of death, an event which to him surely was no great evil, he should discover an agitation of mind, so unlike that firmness which many other men have displayed in circumstances to outward appearance exactly similar. But those who hold the Catholic opinion consider this agony as the fulfilment of the words of Isaiah liii 10, "It pleased the Lord to bruise him;" and of these words, Isaiah lxiii. 3, where the Messiah says of himself, "I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me." They connect this agony with the words spoken by Jesus on the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" and although they presume not to explain in what it consisted, yet as they believe that the wrath of God due to the sins of the world was laid immediately upon Jesus, they find no difficulty in conceiving that his spirit, left without the wonted measure of support and comfort which it derived from its union with the Word and from the presence of his Father, experienced a darkness and desertion in comparison with which all the sorrow that man can inflict is light. Some have applied to this agony that article of the creed, "he descended into hell." But as we know that these words meant, according to the sense of those who first introduced them into the creed, that the soul of Jesus went into the region of departed spirits at the time when his body was laid in the grave, so if we believe there is no such region, we are not warranted by the language of Scripture to apply to the

sufferings of Christ an expression which will seem to us to convey that they were the same in kind as the punishment of the damned.

Whatever was the nature of the agony which shook and troubled the spirit of Jesus, it was connected with entire resignation. He said in the time of it, "Not as I will, but as thou wilt; for this cause came I to this hour:" and at all other times he spoke of his sufferings with a readiness to encounter them, which magnifies his character, and adds to their value. The innocence of Jesus was illustrated by his sufferings; for as the prophet Isaiah had said, liii. 8, 9, according to Bishop Lowth's translation, "he was taken away by an oppressive judgment;" "he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth;" so it appeared, upon the trial which he underwent, that all the malice of his enemies could not convict him of sin. One of his companions on the cross, while he acknowledged that he himself received the just reward of his deeds, declared of Jesus that he had done nothing amiss; and the disciple who betrayed him, after having been intimately acquainted with his private as well as his public life, is introduced in the Gospels repenting of his foul deed, and bearing the most unexceptionable testimony to his Master, in these words, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood." In this manner does the New Testament place the innocence of Jesus fully in our view, at the very time when it describes his sufferings. But it represents him as much more than innocent; for, as I stated formerly in relation to the importance of the doctrine of the Hypostatical Union, the general strain of the New Testament leads us to conjoin the peculiar value which is there affixed to the sufferings of Jesus with the peculiar dignity of his person; and we can clearly discern, in those purposes of the incarnation of the Son of God which the Scriptures declare, the reason why they have dwelt so largely upon the divinity of his character. Thus his condescension is said to consist in this, that he who was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, humbled himself, and became obedient to the death of the cross;* "hereby perceive we," says

* Phil. ii. 6—8.

John, " the love of God, because he laid down his life for us ;"* the love of the Father is commended to us in different places, by his giving his only begotten Son, his beloved Son, and delivering him to the death for us; and Jesus is never classed with martyrs or other righteous men, who " loved not their lives unto the death ;" but the apostles, in speaking of his blood, affix to it a preciousness infinitely beyond that of any blood which ever was shed.

2. The second point to be collected from a general survey of the language and the views of Scripture is this, that the sufferings of Christ, the peculiar bitterness of which derived such a value from the innocence and dignity of the sufferer, are not stated as mere calamity, but are always described under the characters which belong to a punishment of sin. God is never represented as exercising in the sufferings of his Son that right of sovereignty which belongs to the Lord and Proprietor of all, but as inflicting what was due to the transgression of his law; and Jesus Christ, who is essentially distinguished from all other men in this respect, that he did not know sin, is represented in these sufferings as bearing the sins of others.

The different expressions by which this character of the sufferings of Christ is intimated may be reduced to two general classes:

(1.) The first includes all the prepositions in the Greek language that are employed to mark substitution. As it is said by Isaiah " he was wounded for our transgressions," so it is said in the New Testament that " he was delivered for our offences, that he died for us, that he suffered for sins, the just for the unjust."† These expressions certainly suggest the notion of a substitution, in which the sufferings and death of one person are instead of the sufferings and death which the sins of others deserved. But Socinus has led the way to all who hold any part of his system, in attempting to elude this notion, by saying, that Christ's suffering for sins means nothing more than his suffering for this end, that we might be led to forsake our sins; and that his dying for us only means his dying for our advantage. No person who is accustomed

* 1 John iii. 16. † Rom. iv. 25; v. 8. 1 Pet. iii. 18.

to study language will assert in answer to this interpretation, that *for* necessarily implies substitution, because every scholar knows that even when he is able to ascertain the primary meaning of a preposition, he often finds that primary meaning so qualified by the words with which the preposition is joined, that in different situations it appears totally different. We say in English, Christ suffered for sins, and Christ suffered for us; but every one understands the preposition *for* to have different meanings in these two phrases. We explain the first, Christ suffered upon account of sins; the second, Christ suffered instead of the sinners. And this ambiguity is not peculiar to the English; in Greek also the same preposition ὑπερ is employed to express these different ideas; for we read, 1 Pet. ii. 21, 2 Cor. v. 15, Χριστος επαθεν, απεθανεν ὑπερ ἡμων; 1 Cor. xv. 3, απεθανεν ὑπερ των ἁμαρτιων ἡμων. The proper meaning of ὑπερ is over, above. It suggests primarily the notion of covering; and this may be applied, either to the covering a person from danger, or to the covering a thing from sight. The phrase ὑπερ ἡμων may denote any kind of benefit which we derive from another person; but it marks with peculiar fitness his sustaining that harm which we should have sustained, had we not been covered by him. It cannot be denied that classical writers use ὑπερ in situations where a substitution is plainly implied; and the Scriptures intimate that there is a peculiar emphasis in the application of this preposition to the sufferings of Christ. For although the apostle Paul, Col. i. 24, speaks of τοις παθημασι μου ὑπερ ὑμων, yet he asks, 1 Cor. i. 13, μη Παυλος εσταυρωθη ὑπερ ὑμων; intimating, that even although his enemies should crucify him, his crucifixion could not give him that kind of connexion with Christians which arose from the crucifixion of Christ. In the other phrase, ὑπερ ἁμαρτιων, ὑπερ cannot denote advantage; and without a violent ellipsis it cannot be understood of the final cause; for the end of Christ's sufferings was not our sins, but the remission of our sins. But it is naturally understood, according to a frequent use of this preposition, of what we call the antecedent cause; that cause which, having a previous existence, produces an action. Sins existed before Christ died, and their demerit produced his sufferings; therefore it is said, απεθανεν ὑπερ ἁμαρτιων, as we read in Iso-

crates, ὑπερ ὡν δοντες τως θεοις δικας,* and often in Latin, *pro injuriis ulcisi.* The antecedent cause is expressed in different places of Isaiah liii. by the preposition δια, the preposition most commonly used in that sense. Ετραυματισθη δια τας ἁμαρτιας ἡμων—δια τας ανομιας αυτων παρεδοθη; and the apostle Paul appears to have copied this expression, Rom iv. 25; yet, in that verse, δια is also used to mark the final cause; for while our offences were the antecedent cause which produced the sufferings of Christ, our justification is the end obtained by his resurrection. Περι is also used in the Greek Testament for this purpose, as Rom. viii. 3; 1 Peter iii. 18. Περι ἁμαρτιων means, in relation to our sins; and the nature of the relation is to be gathered from the Septuagint, where what is rendered in our English Bible, "he shall bring for his sin which he hath sinned," runs in the Greek, οισει περι της ἁμαρτιας ἡς ἡμαρτε. This expression, therefore, is one of the many instances in which the New Testament leads us back to the sacrifices of the law.

There is one Greek preposition yet remaining, αντι, which our Lord himself uses, Matt. xx. 28; from whence the apostle Paul, 1 Tim. ii. 6, probably formed the compound word αντιλυτρον. It is well known that αντι, which properly expresses that one thing is set over against another, conveys the nature of commutation, substitution, succession; and it was impossible to find any preposition which could have marked more precisely this idea, that the life of Christ is given instead of many. Even αντι, however, may be used by the best writers in a looser sense, for the advantage of; and no scholar would choose to rest an important article of faith upon the strict acceptation of a preposition. We do not therefore argue, that because we find υπερ, δια, and αντι employed upon this subject, the Catholic opinion is unquestionably the doctrine of Scripture. But we maintain, that if there was in the death of Christ a substitution of his sufferings for the punishment of sin, it could not have been more naturally or significantly expressed than by these prepositions; and that the meaning which a reader whose mind is unwarped by system feels himself disposed to affix to them, and the violent

* Isoc. Plat. p. 716. Edit. Basil.

interpretations which are necessary in order to evade that meaning, create a strong presumption in favour of the truth of this opinion.

(2.) But there is a second class of expressions in Scripture, in which that character of a punishment for sin, which seems to be signified by the use of these prepositions, is directly applied to the sufferings of Christ.

Isaiah, after having said "he was wounded for our transgressions, and he was bruised for our iniquities," adds, "παιδεια ειρηνης επ' αυτου, τω μωλωπι αυτου ἡμεις ιαθημεν; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, by his stripes we are healed." Again, "ανοισει, he shall bear their iniquities, ανηνεγκε, he bare the sin of many." This language of the prophet is copied, 1 Peter ii. 24, and it is referred to, Heb. ix. 28. The significancy of the preposition ανα in the compound verb ανηνεγκε lies in this, that as Jesus was lifted up on the cross, he may be said to have carried our sins upward when he bore them; and that this circumstance was attended to in the use of this compound verb appears not improbable, when we find the apostle, Heb. vii. 27, applying the same verb αναφερω first to the sacrifices of the law which were lifted upon the altar, and then to the offering of Christ upon the cross.

There are two ways in which Socinus and his followers endeavour to evade the force of the expression ανηνεγκεν ἁμαρτιας. They admit that according to the usual sense of the verb the phrase is properly rendered as in our translation, "he bare our sins." But they say that, as the nature of the thing does not admit of a literal translation, we are to consider the phrase as equivalent to another which is used in different places by the apostle John, "his taking away sins," *i. e.* his leading us to forsake them. But it is a forced mode of interpreting Scripture, to have recourse to an unusual sense of a phrase, when that sense manifestly omits a part of the information given concerning the subject to which the phrase is applied. For although it be true that Jesus is said, John i. 29, 1 John iii. 5, αιρειν ἁμαρτιας, yet the precise mode of taking them away is declared to be by bearing them; and although the scape-goat, which carried the sins of the children of Israel into the wilderness on the day of atonement, may be considered as a type of Christ's taking away sin, yet the

scape-goat was only one part of the ceremonies prescribed for that day; and when all the ceremonies are laid together, if the scape-goat denoted that the sins were taken away, for the very same reason, the other goat which was killed on that day must be considered as a type of his blood being shed for sin.

The other way in which Socinus and his followers endeavour to evade the force of the expression ανηνεγκεν ἁμαρτιας, is by saying, that bearing our iniquities, if that translation be admitted, means nothing more than that they were the occasion of his suffering; as a person is said in the Old Testament to bear the sins of his ancestors, when he suffers calamities in his person or his fortune, which he would not have endured if they had been innocent. But this method of evading the natural sense of the phrase by no means answers the purpose for which it is resorted to. For it may be observed in general, that that part of the constitution of nature, by which posterity may be thus said to bear the sins of their ancestors, is in reality an extension of the punishment of sin, which is declared by God in the second commandment, "visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children." This extension of the punishment of sin demonstrates in a striking manner the painful nature of transgression, and calls in the natural affection of parents for their offspring as a guard to their own innocence. In every case, therefore, where bearing the sins of others is allowed to mean suffering of which these sins are the occasion, that suffering is truly the punishment of sin. But with regard to this particular case, it is to be observed farther, that we are not left to suppose that the connexion between sin and the sufferings of Christ was incidental, or merely the result of the general constitution of nature; for we are taught by a variety of the most precise expressions, that this connexion was specially constituted by God, and that in it are to be found the reason and the intention of the sufferings of Christ. Isaiah says, "the chastisement of our peace was upon him;" but chastisement always means suffering connected with a fault, intended either for the correction of the person who endures it, or for an example to others. As chastisement which includes death cannot be designed to correct the sufferer, and as Jesus stood in no need of

correction; the chastisement which he endured must be considered as exemplary; and its being called "the chastisement of our peace" clearly means that the punishment, without which we could not be restored to peace with God, was borne by him. The same thing is more fully expressed by Isaiah, as his words are rendered by Bishop Lowth. "The Lord made to meet upon him the iniquities of us all. It was required of him, and he was made answerable."

There are two striking expressions to this purpose used by the apostle Paul. The one is in 2 Cor. v. 21. The apostle vindicates the personal innocence of his Master by saying, that he did not know sin. At the same time, in order to show that he was counted and treated as a sinner, not merely in the judgment of men, but in the judgment and by the appointment of God, he says, that God hath made him to be sin. This most significant manner of marking the connexion between his sufferings and sin is taken from the Septuagint, Lev. iv. 29; v. 9; where a sin offering is often called ἁμαρτημα, ἁμαρτια, because it was offered for sin; and the Latin writers intimate the same connexion in a similar manner, when they use *piaculum* both for the crime, *piacula commissa*, and for the victim by whose death the crime was supposed to be expiated.

The other expression of the apostle Paul is, Gal. iii. 10, 13. The reason assigned for the kind of death which Jesus died clearly implies a substitution for sinners. The Jews employed other methods of taking away the life of a criminal. But they did, in some cases, hang upon a tree the body of a person who had been put to death for a crime. They were forbidden by their law, however, to allow the body to remain all night upon the tree. Deut. xxi. 22, 23. "If a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree; his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day, (for he that is hanged is accursed of God,) that thy land be not defiled." The reason of this order is plainly no part of the civil punishment; that was completed by the death of the criminal, and by the infamy of his hanging upon a tree; it is merely a declaration of the light in which the person who had suffered this civil punishment was viewed

by God. The law also said, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them." All men as transgressors of the law, were subject to this curse, and Jesus in order to redeem them from the curse, was made a curse for them, by hanging on a tree; for when we consider that he who had power to lay down his life, had certainly power to choose the manner of laying it down, and that the Scriptures expressly say, "he was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God;"* we cannot but consider his choosing to hang upon a tree, a situation declared by the ceremonial law to be accursed of God, as intended to demonstrate to the world, that although he himself continued in all things written in the law to do them, his death was not merely the infliction of human law upon an innocent man, but a suffering which in the sight of God was penal.

By this variety of the most marked expressions do the Scriptures present to us the sufferings of Christ under the character of punishment, *i. e.* as suffering which could not, from the nature of things, be the very punishment which the sinner deserved, but which was laid upon an innocent person for the sins of others.

3. To complete the argument in favour of the Catholic opinion which arises from a general survey of the language and views of Scripture, we have now to attend to the different classes of expression by which the effects of the sufferings of Christ are described.

(1.) The first class comprehends all those expressions in which the words reconciliation, propitiation, atonement, and making peace, are connected with the sufferings of Christ. Of this kind are the following: Col. i. 19, 20. 1 John ii. 2; iv. 10. Rom. iii. 25; v. 11. "It pleased the Father, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself. He hath set him forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood. By him we have now received the atonement."

The verbs translated reconcile are καταλλασσω, αποκαταλλασσω; and the noun rendered atonement is καταλλαγη. The verbs mean nothing more than a change from one state to another, but the situation in which they are introduced determines the change to be from enmity to friend-

* Acts ii. 23.

ship. The words rendered propitiation are derived from ἱλασκω; a verb known in the Greek classics to denote *propitium reddo*, the action of the person, who, in some appointed method, turned away the wrath of a deity; and a verb used by the authors of the Septuagint to express the action of the priest, who by presenting the sin-offering made atonement for the offerer. As these actions are precisely similar, both are expressed by the verb in the middle voice. Homer says, ὀφρ' ἡμιν Ἑκαεργον ἱλασσεαι, ἱερα ἑξῆς:* and it is said of the priest in the Septuagint, ἐξιλασεται, or ἐξιλασατο, περι ἁμαρτιας.† But when the intercession of Moses had upon one occasion turned away the wrath of God, this effect is expressed by the verb in the passive, ἱλασθη Κυριος.‡ As the use of the verb ἱλασκω in the Septuagint is thus exactly agreeable to the classical sense of it, it seems natural to understand, in the same sense, the words derived from that verb which are applied in the New Testament to express the effects of the death of Christ. The words are, ἱλασμος, which having been applied in the law to the sin-offering, is applied 1 John ii. 2. and iv. 10. to our Saviour; and ἱλαστηριον, Rom. iii. 25, which may be rendered, as in our English Bible, propitiation, by supplying θυμα, but which from the analogy of κριτηριον, βουλευτηριον, θυσιαστηριον, supplying βημα, should rather be translated propitiatory or mercy-seat; a sense of the word which has been eagerly laid hold of by some of the Socinians, but which appears to be not less adverse to their system than the word propitiation, because the mercy-seat never was approached without blood. There is only one place in the New Testament, Heb. ii. 17, in which the verb ἱλασκω is applied to our Saviour. Although the construction be not exactly the same as in the Septuagint, where the noun is governed by περι, it is plain that the sense of the verb is totally changed if it be translated, as the Socinians propose, taking away sin, *i. e.* destroying its power in the sinner; for here is a third person intervening between God and the sins of the people, whose action in turning away wrath is expressed, as in Homer and in the Septuagint, by the middle voice of ἱλασκω.

It appears then, that the amount of all the expressions,

* Hom. Il. i. 147. † Levit. v. ‡ Exod. xxxii. 14.

comprehended under the first class, is precisely that which the apostles have sometimes stated, when, speaking of the death of Christ, they say, "we are saved from wrath by him:" and no person who reads the Scriptures can be at a loss to know what that wrath is. For although, in the refinement of some modern systems, it is counted a degradation of the Supreme Being to ascribe to him what has been called punitive justice, there are no views of the divine government more frequent or more clear in Scripture, than those upon which this attribute is rested. When we open the Old Testament, we find justice and judgment accompanying mercy in the descriptions of the Almighty, and many of the passages which have been quoted, in proof of the placability of the divine nature, contain this clause; "who will by no means clear the guilty."* The history of the Old Testament abounds with examples, in which the hatred of sin often ascribed to the Almighty was made manifest by awful punishments of the wicked; and one of these examples is thus interpreted by Jude; Sodom and Gomorrah προκεινται δειγμα, πυρος αιωνιου δικην υπεχουσαι.† John the Baptist introduces the new dispensation, by declaring that if any one believed not on the Son of God, ἡ ὀργη Θεου μενει επ' αυτον.‡ The character of the new dispensation is thus drawn by Paul, Rom. i. 18, αποκαλυπτεται γαρ ὀργη Θεου απ' ουρανου επι πασαν ασεβειαν και αδικιαν ανθρωπων· not a transient emotion, but a fixed purpose to punish transgression. This expression of the law, εμοι εκδικησις, εγω ανταποδωσω, is quoted as the principle of that punishment of which he shall be thought worthy who despises the Gospel.§ Retributive justice is thus accurately described, 2 Thess. i. 6, Ειπερ δικαιον παρα Θεῳ ανταποδουναι τοις θλιβουσιν ὑμας θλιψιν and although immediate and temporal calamities are not the standing method of executing retributive justice, as they were in part under the former dispensation, yet the future judgment which the Gospel reveals, and unto which the wicked are said to be reserved, is called ἡμερα ὀργης, and is described both by our Lord and his apostles, in terms which imply the most complete display of what those who hold the Catholic opinion mean by the punitive justice of the Supreme Lawgiver.

* Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.
† Jude 7.
‡ John iii. 36.
§ Heb. x. 28—30.

Such are the descriptions of the Almighty which pervade the Scriptures, and they clearly explain to us that effect of the death of Christ which is marked by the first class of expressions. The Gospel, proceeding upon the truth of these descriptions, assumes, as its principle, that without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins; and declaring that the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sins, it deduces from thence the necessity of a better sacrifice. It asserts, Heb. ii. 10, that it became him by whom and through whom are all things, to make the Captain of salvation perfect through sufferings; επρεπεν αυτῳ, *i. e.* that there was a fitness in them resulting from the character of the Supreme Ruler; and by representing them as vicarious punishment, with which reconciliation and atonement are connected, it teaches clearly that the wrath of God is turned away from the sinner, by the punishment which he deserved being laid upon another.

The Socinians endeavour to evade the argument drawn from the first class of expressions, by maintaining that reconciliation means nothing more than the taking away the enmity which we entertained against God; that it is nowhere said in Scripture that God is reconciled to us by Christ's death, but that we are everywhere said to be reconciled to God; that the sufferings of Christ can produce no change in God, and that the change must be brought about in man; that there can be no need of reconciling God to man, when he had already shown his love to man so far as to send his Son to reconcile man to God. But in addition to what has been said of the punitive justice of God, I would farther observe, that as the term which we translate reconciliation implies a previous enmity or variance which was mutual, so the Scriptures explicitly declare, by all those views of the Almighty which I have been collecting, that there was an enmity on God's part; and the exhortation to lay aside the enmity on our part proceeds upon this foundation, that the enmity on God's part is taken away by the death of his Son. Διαλλαττεσθαι and words connected with it are five times applied in the New Testament with respect to God: Rom. v. 10, 11; xi. 15: Ephes. ii. 16; Col. i. 20, 21. In this last passage particularly there is implied a previous enmity or variance which

was mutual. The words are twice used with respect to man; Matt. v. 24; 1 Cor. vii, 11. In both these passages the meaning is, see that he be reconciled to thee; for in both the person addressed has done the injury. The verb διαλλαττεσθαι occurs in the same sense in the Septuagint verson of 1 Sam. xxix. 4. If you read 2 Cor. v. 18—21, the passage upon which the Socinians ground their argument, you will be satisfied that their method of interpreting reconciliation leaves out half its meaning. Here is a previous act of God, who hath reconciled all things to himself by Jesus Christ, who does not count to men their trespasses, and who committed to the apostles of Jesus the word or the ministry of reconciliation; and subsequent to this act of God there is the execution of that ministry, by their beseeching men to be reconciled to God. The ministry is distinct from the act of God, because God does not immediately receive all sinners into favour by his Son, but requires something of those to whom the word of reconciliation is published, in order to their being saved by it. But the ministry could not have existed had not the act of God, reconciling all things to himself, previously taken place; and accordingly the very argument by which the apostle urges the exhortation committed to him is this; "for he hath made him to be sin for us," *i. e.* God hath provided a method by which we may be assured that his anger is turned away from us; it only therefore remains that ye return to him.

(2.) The second class comprehends those expressions in which we read of redemption; as 1 Peter i. 18; Eph. i. 7. "Ye were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ; we have redemption through his blood." As our English word redeem literally means, I buy back, so λυτροω, απολυτρωσις, the Greek words used in the New Testament, are properly applied to the action of setting a captive free by paying λυτρον, a ransom; and thus the sufferings of Christ are presented under the particular view of a price, by the payment of which we are set free.

Those who deny the truth of the Catholic opinion attempt to withdraw the support which it appears to receive from this class of expressions by the following reasoning. It is impossible, they say, to apply these expressions in their literal acceptation to the effect of the sufferings of

Christ. For as a ransom is always paid to the person by whom the captive is detained, and as we were the servants of Satan, these expressions, literally understood, would imply that the death of Christ was a price paid to Satan. Since we must depart from the literal sense, it seems most natural to understand redemption as equivalent to deliverance; for we read in the Old Testament of God's redeeming his people from trouble, from death, from danger, when no price is supposed to have been given; and Moses, who was the instrument employed by God to deliver his people from the bondage of Egypt, is called, Acts vii. 35, λυτρωτης. But if redemption means nothing more than a deliverance from sin, as effectually as if a ransom had been paid, the second class of expressions gives no real support to the Catholic opinion; and is not inconsistent either with the Socinian opinion, which ascribes the deliverance to the influence of the doctrine and precepts of the Gospel, or with the Middle opinion, which ascribes it to the power acquired by the Redeemer.

This reasoning proceeds upon a principle which is readily admitted, that both the English and the Greek words are often extended beyond their original signification. Although they denoted primarily deliverance from captivity by paying a ransom, they are applied to deliverance from any evil, and they are used to express deliverance by any means. Almost all other words, which originally denoted a particular manner of doing a thing, are susceptible of a similar extension of meaning, and it is the business of sound criticism to determine, by considering the circumstances of the case, how far the primary signification is to be retained, or with what qualifications it is to be understood in every particular application. Now when we judge in this manner of the second class of expressions, the following remarks naturally present themselves.

1. It is not necessary to depart from their literal meaning, when they are applied to the effect of the death of Christ. For according to the true statement of the Catholic opinion, we are considered as under the sentence of condemnation which our sins deserved, as prisoners waiting the execution of the sentence, and as released by the death of Christ from this condition. Deliverance from the

dominion of sin and the power of Satan is a secondary effect, a consequence of the application of the remedy; redemption of our bodies from the grave is another effect still more remote. Both are mentioned in Scripture; but the immediate effect of the death of Christ is, our deliverance from punishment, what the apostle calls the curse of the law; and this punishment being in the power of the lawgiver by whom it was to be inflicted, the ransom, in consideration of which it is remitted and the condemned are set free, may be said to be given to him. 2. Although a captive may be released without any ransom, and although λυω, or verbs derived from λυτρον, may be employed most naturally to express such a gratuitous release, yet this extension of the primary meaning of these words is excluded from the case to which they are applied in the New Testament, because a λυτρον is there expressly mentioned. When a Greek author, in relating the release of a prisoner, speaks repeatedly of ἀποινα, or λυτρα, as Homer does in the first book of the Iliad, it cannot be supposed that the redemption was without price. Every one feels this effect of introducing the noun λυτρον, when the captive was detained by force under the power of an enemy; and the significancy of the noun is not in the least diminished, when the prisoner is redeemed from a captivity which the Scriptures represent as judicial. The λυτρον indeed, in that case, is not a price from which the lawgiver is to derive any advantage; it is the satisfaction to justice upon which he consents to remit the sentence; but still the mention of a λυτρον is absolutely inconsistent with a gratuitous remission. 3. The Septuagint has used the word λυτρον in two places, to denote the consideration upon which a judicial sentence was remitted. There was the λυτρα ψυχης, Exod. xxx. 12—16, called in our translation the atonement-money; half a shekel given for the service of the sanctuary by every one who was numbered, upon all occasions when the number of the people was taken, that there might be no plague among them. There was also λυτρα πρωτοτοκων. The first born of every animal was sacred to the Lord. But God declared, Numb. iii. 12, 46—51, that he took the whole tribe of Levi, instead of the first-born of all the tribes, on which account they are called λυτρα πρωτοτοκων; and as the whole number of the tribe

of Levi fell short of the first-born males of all the other tribes by some hundreds, the Lord required for every one of this odd number the sum of five shekels, which is called in our translation, the redemption-money, in the Greek, λυτρα των πλεοναζοντων. Here, then, is λυτρον, which is known to denote in classical writers, a ransom paid in order to procure the release of a captive, applied in the Septuagint, by a most natural extension of meaning, to the consideration given for deliverance from death; an evil which the person so delivered could, in no other way, have escaped, any more than the captive could have recovered his liberty without the ransom; and the same idea is followed out in the New Testament. For as Paul says, 1 Cor. vi. 20, ηγορασθητε τιμης; and as Peter, i. 18, in describing the price, has a manifest reference to the atonement-money and redemption-money of the law, so the price by which we are bought and redeemed is called, Matt. xx. 28, λυτρον αντι πολλων; and 1 Tim. ii. 6, αντιλυτρον υπερ παντων. Whether, then, we interpret the New Testament according to the classical Greek, or according to that which has been called the Hellenistical Greek, *i. e.* the Greek spoken by those Hebrews who, living mostly in the Grecian cities, used that universal language, but corrupted it by many Hebrew idioms; we cannot avoid considering the second class of expressions as suggesting that something was given for our deliverance. And thus, the second class of expressions, by which the Scriptures mark the effects of the death of Christ, exactly coincides as to its amount with the first. The first class represents the wrath which the sins of mankind deserved, as turned away by the sufferings which another endured; the second class represents prisoners under sentence of death for sin as set free, upon account of the sufferings by which another paid a ransom for their souls.

(3.) The third class comprehends all those passages, in which forgiveness of sins is connected with the death of Christ. The words commonly used in the Greek Testament for this purpose are αφιημι and αφεσις. The verb, which signifies *mitto a me*, may be applied in many different situations; the meaning is always understood to be qualified by the circumstances of the case, and may easily be accommodated to that which we mean by forgiveness.

For, as every sin involves an obligation to punishment, when the Lawgiver sends away from him the sin, he cancels the obligation and declares his resolution not to inflict the punishment which the transgression of his law deserved.

The Socinians argue, from the frequent use of this expression in the New Testament, that forgiveness of sin is an act of the same kind with the remission of a debt. Αφιημι is applied, in classical writers, to both acts; for we read αφιημι σε του χρεους, and αφιημι σε του εγκληματος:* and our Lord seems to teach us that there is no difference between the acts, by giving sins the name of debts, and applying to them under this name the verb αφιημι. Thus, one of the petitions of the Lord's Prayer is, αφες ἡμιν τα οφειληματα ἡμων; and in the parable, Matt. xviii. the Almighty is represented as a master who says to the servant that owed him ten thousand talents, πασαν την οφειλην εκεινην αφηκα σοι. This manner of expression certainly proceeds upon an obvious resemblance between the two subjects: the creditor has a perfect right to demand payment of his debt; the lawgiver has a perfect right to inflict punishment upon the transgression of the law; and therefore, when the one remits the debt, and the other forgives the transgression, they do what no person is entitled to require of them. But the New Testament, in order to guard us against inferring from this resemblance, that the act of the Supreme Lawgiver in forgiving sin is of the same kind with the act of a creditor who remits a debt without asking payment, connects the forgiveness of sins with the blood of Christ, which is elsewhere declared to have been shed as a punishment of sin. For it is not only said that remission of sins is one of the blessings of the new covenant preached in the name of Jesus, expressions which might be reconciled with the Socinian system that the Gospel is merely a declaration of forgivenesss; but it is said, Acts xiii. 38, δια τουτου, through the means of this man, ὑμιν αφεσις ἁμαρτιων καταγγελλεται. And the means employed by this man are explained in such passages as the following: 1 John i. 7, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin;" Rev. i. 5, "To him that washed

* Scapulæ Lexicon, in verb. αφιημι.

us from our sins in his own blood." And still more expressly, Matt. xxvi. 28, and Ephes. i. 7; in which last passage the remission of sin is introduced as the explication of that redemption or release from the sentence of the law, which was purchased by the blood of Christ, and both are ascribed to the riches of the grace of God. It is plain, therefore, that to the writers of the New Testament there did not appear any inconsistency between the forgiveness of sins and the laying the punishment of them upon another; and by declaring the intimate connexion between these two, they give their sanction to that leading principle in the statement of the Catholic opinion, which distinguishes the act of a lawgiver who in forgiving sins has respect to the authority of the law, from the act of a creditor who in remitting a debt disposes of his property at his pleasure.

(4.) The last expression by which the Scriptures mark the death of Christ is that in which we are said to be justified by his blood, and through faith in his blood.

I mean not to speak at present of many questions respecting that act of God called justification, which will find their proper place under the application of the Gospel remedy. But as the change upon our condition, which is implied in the word justification, and which is ascribed to the efficacy of the blood of Christ, corresponds most exactly with the principles upon which the reasonableness of the Catholic opinion rests, I cannot better conclude the defence of that opinion, than by illustrating this particular view of the subject. And for that purpose I shall take, as the ground of my observations, that part of the apostle Paul's writings, in which he discourses fully of justification through the death of Christ, I mean Rom. iii. 19—20.

The word δικαιοω is used both in the Septuagint and in the Greek Testament, in a sense to which nothing perfectly analogous occurs in classical writers. The sense is called forensic, *i. e.* it expresses the act of a lawgiver or judge pronouncing a person righteous in the eye of the law, so as to be acquitted from all obligation to punishment. Rom. viii. 33. τις εγκαλεσει κατα εκλεκτων Θεου; Θεος ὁ δικαιουν· τις ὁ κατακρινων; the word is used in the same sense by the Psalmist, Ps. cxliii. 2. Και μη εισελθης εις κριση

μετα του δουλου σου, ὁτι ου δικαιωθησεται ενωπιον σου πας ζων. The apostle, who had just been quoting the ancient Scriptures of the Jews, seems to have had this passage of the Psalms in his view, when he says, Rom. iii. 20, διοτι εξ εργων νομου ου δικαιωθησεται πασα σαρξ ενωπιον αυτου· δια γαρ νομου επιγνωσις ἁμαρτιας. This is the conclusion from the preceding part of his discourse, in which he has proved that all, both Jews and Gentiles, are under sin, and the whole world ὑποδικος τῳ Θεῳ. It is plain therefore, that the justification or acquittal of men in the sight of God cannot arise out of the works of the law; for if, as the apostle has shown, a law was given by revelation to the Jews, and was written upon the hearts of the Gentiles, it would appear, when they came before their Judge, that all of them knew what sin was, and therefore that all of them deserved to be condemned for being sinners. But how can those who deserve to be condemned as sinners be justified by a righteous God? The apostle had asserted, Rom. i. 17, that a method of doing this was revealed in the Gospel; which method is the explication of that saying found in the law, "The just by faith shall live." But before he comes to illustrate and confirm this assertion, he throws in a long discourse, the purport of which is to show that there is not upon earth a person δικαιος εξ εργων, and therefore that if there is such a thing as justification, it cannot be δια νομου. Having established this point, which is the foundation of the Gospel, he repeats his assertion in the 21st verse, with an addition, which he is now entitled to make; χωρις νομου, *i. e.* abstractedly from law, independently of the precepts contained in the Mosaic system, or written on the hearts of men; and yet not in opposition to the law, for this method of justifying men was witnessed, *i. e.* foretold and foreshown by the law and the prophets. The method of justifying men, which is independent of law, and yet was witnessed by the law, is called most significantly, δικαιοσυνη Θεου. The meaning of this name is in part explained by its being opposed, Rom. x. 3, to ἰδια δικαιοσυνη. The apostle has shown that ἰδια δικαιοσυνη, or, δικαιοσυνη δια νομου, Gal. ii. 21, does not exist; and therefore, the method of justifying men may most properly be called δικαιοσυνη Θεου, because it must be such as God is pleased to appoint. But this name implies fur-

ther that it is a method becoming that God who is just; a part of the significancy of the name which the apostle places fully in our view, when he comes to explain the method. But before he gives the explication, he distinguishes the method which he is going to explain from justification εξ εργων or δια νομου, by this addition, δια πιστεως Ιησου Χριστου; and he says it extends to all who believe, whether Jews or Gentiles, because in this respect there was no distinction between them, that all stood in need of the revelation of such a method, since by having sinned they had come short of that approbation which proceeds from God, and their actions, however agreeable to the maxims and customs of the world, could not, when tried in his righteous judgment, entitle them to a sentence of acquittal.

The necessity of a method of justifying men, not formerly revealed being now fully proved, and the method being discriminated from every other by the names applied to it, the apostle proceeds to illustrate the propriety of these names, by explaining what it is. His explication is found in the 24th, 25th, and 26th verses. The apostle has introduced into this short description the great principles upon which the reasonableness of the Catholic opinion rests, and the chief of those Scripture expressions by which the truth of it is proved. He begins with ascribing this method of justifying men to the free grace of God. As far as they are concerned justification is granted to them δωρεαν, as a free gift; because their works did not entitle them to acquittal, and had it not been for the good-will of the Lawgiver, they must have been condemned. But this free gift is dispensed in a particular manner. The Lawgiver does not simply justify, but he justifies through the redemption that is in or by Jesus Christ. Απολυτρωσις suggests that the υποδικοι were delivered from the execution of the sentence of the law by the payment of a ransom; and necessarily implies the good-will of the ransomer. This interpretation of the word is confirmed by our being told, immediately after, that the υποδικοι were delivered, not merely by the power, but by the blood of the ransomer; for the apostle adds, "whom God set forth, or exhibited to the world, ιλαστηριον δια της πιστεως εν τω αυτου αιματι." Whether ιλαστηριον be translated a propitiation or

a propitiatory, the amount is the same. Either way his blood is the mean of turning away wrath; and we found formerly that there is not only consistency, but the most intimate connexion between his blood propitiating the lawgiver, and being the ransom by which the ὑποδικοι are set free.

The purpose for which God chose this particular manner of displaying his grace in justifying sinners is next mentioned. Εις ενδειξιν της δικαιοσυνης αὐτου, προς ενδειξιν της δικαιοσυνης αὐτου. This repetition is a proof that the two intervening clauses are to be considered as a parenthesis, thrown in to illustrate the propriety of this method of declaring the righteousness of God. The intervening clauses are thus rendered in our translation; "for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;" but they might be more literally rendered, "upon account of the passing by of former sins in the forbearance of God." Προγεγονοτων marks the sins committed before setting forth the propitiation, *i. e.* before the time of the Gospel. The παρεσις of these sins is rendered in our translation, the remission of them; yet it is remarkable that the apostle does not here use αφεσις, the word used for remission, both by our Lord and by the apostle himself, at all other times, and formed from αφιημι, the verb used in the Septuagint for forgiving sin. It is probable that the apostle had a reason for this singularity; and many attempts have been made to find a reason in the different signification of the two words. The truth is, that the joining αφεσις and παρεσις to ἁμαρτηματων is an application of both words, almost peculiar to the sacred writers; and that neither the etymology of παριημι, nor the practice of classical authors entitles us to say that it marks a less complete degree of forgiveness than αφιημι. This passage, therefore, gives no countenance to a system which has been formed with regard to the extent of the Gospel-remedy, that those who lived under the Mosaic dispensation did not obtain entire deliverance from the punishment of sin till Christ came; and there is no other passage which warrants us to consider the forgiveness of sins committed before that period, as different in kind, with respect to its effects upon the sinner, from the forgiveness of sins committed after it. But when it is recollected that the sacrifices offered by the

Jews did not purify the conscience, and that the heathen who had no direction from heaven often violated the laws of morality in the manner of offering their sacrifices, it is manifest that the forgiveness which was dispensed before the Gospel could not be in consideration of any satisfaction which was then made to the divine justice; and, therefore, that this time may be called ανοχη Θεου, a time of forbearance, or as the word is often rendered in classical writers *induciae*, a truce, during which the punishments due to the sins of men were suspended in so far, that the human race was allowed to exist, and to enjoy the bounties of Providence, although the whole world was guilty before God; and many, whose names are mentioned in Scripture with honour, obtained forgiveness, although we cannot avoid considering them also as concluded under sin, because there is not a just man upon earth that liveth and sinneth not.

The forgiveness granted during this truce may most fitly be called παρεσις; because, however complete in respect of the persons to whom it was granted, it "sent by their side," transmitted to another time, the punishment which their sins deserved. This interpretation of the word corresponds exactly with an expression of the same apostle in his discourse at Athens; Acts xvii. 30. Τους μεν ουν χρονους της αγνοιας υπεριδων ο Θεος, τανυν παραγγελλει τοις ανθρωποις πασι πανταχου μετανοειν. And these two expressions, when thus considered as explaining one another, place in a striking light the significancy of the two clauses which I called a parenthesis. A truce, during which there was a suspension of the punishment due to sin, and the supreme Lawgiver overlooked transgressions, rendered the more necessary a demonstration of his justice; and therefore, in the time that now is, when the purposes for which the truce was continued so long are accomplished, and το πληρωμα του χρονου, the fulness of time foretold by ancient prophets is arrived, he hath set forth his Son as a propitiation, who, in shedding his blood, endured the wrath due to sins which had been committed, to the end that God, when he now justifies graciously those who could not be justified by their own works, might appear to be righteous. Now we see that the sins which God appeared to pass by in former times, when he granted for-

giveness, were not forgiven without the shedding of that blood which was of infinitely greater value than the blood of bulls and goats, being the propitiation ordained and accepted of God, and in the fulness of time set forth, through faith in which all that believe are justified.

The apostle, after stating that boasting is effectually excluded by the method of justification which does not arise out of works, and that every charge of partiality in the Supreme Being is removed by the riches of that grace which extends without distinction to all that believe, subjoins, *νομον ουν καταργουμεν δια της πιστεως; μη γενοιτο· αλλα νομον ιστωμεν.* The objection is a natural one. If the method of justifying men, which God has now set forth, is *χωρις νομου*, apart from law, we seem to render the law idle, useless; and we encourage men to transgress it. Far from it, answers the Apostle. By the punishment, in this propitiation, of past sins that had seemed to be overlooked, and by justification through faith in the blood of Christ, we establish the law; or God thus demonstrates to the world that transgressors have no hope of escaping with impunity; whereas, if no such propitiation had been set forth, the impunity of the old world, and the justification of those who could not be justified by their own works, might have encouraged men to continue in sin.

Other interpretations of this passage have been given. But if it appears that by understanding every word in its natural and usual acceptation, we bring out a sense of the whole passage consistent with the context, and agreeable to other parts of the Apostle's writings, there is the strongest internal evidence that we have interpreted the apostle rightly; and, in that case, there is here an apostle of Jesus giving, in a full and formal discourse, the most explicit confirmation of the Catholic opinion. He presents to us the Supreme Being under the character of a lawgiver, and he states the death of Christ as an event intended to establish the law by exhibiting the punitive justice of the lawgiver. At the same time, far from considering this method of vindicating the divine authority as inconsistent with the love of God to man, he ascribes the justification which is thus dispensed, to the free grace of God. He does not, as the Socinians do, place the love of God in this, that he forgave sins without reference to any other

being, but he says, Rom. v. 8, that "God commendeth his love to us, in that, while we were sinners, Christ died for us;" and he does not, like those who hold the middle opinion, rest our deliverance from the evils of sin merely upon the power acquired by our Redeemer, but, having presented, as we have seen, the death of Christ under the character of a punishment by which the justice of the law-giver is demonstrated, he unfolds the same idea when he says, Rom. v. 9, 11, "Being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him; and not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement."

Grotius de Satisfactione Christi.
Stillingfleet on the Sufferings of Christ.
Clarke.
Tomkins' Jesus Christ the Mediator.
Elliot's Vicarious Sacrifice.
Law's Theory of Religion.
Warburton.
Macknight's Comm. on the Hebrews, and Essay on the Mediation of Christ.
Magee on the Atonement.

CHAP. IV.

ETERNAL LIFE.

In order to complete the view contained in the Catholic opinion of the nature of the Gospel remedy, we have yet to consider in what manner it connects the hope of life eternal with the interposition of Jesus Christ.

According to the Socinian opinion, Jesus Christ is simply the messenger who brought from God, together with the assurance of pardon, the promise of life eternal to all who repent; and according to the middle opinion, he received from his Father, in recompense for his sufferings, the power of giving eternal life, so that all those who receive this inestimable gift receive it upon his account as the partakers of his reward. There is another opinion upon this subject found amongst the many hypotheses with which the works of the ingenious and eccentric Bishop Warburton abound. It is mentioned occasionally in former parts of his works, and from him it descended to Bishop Hurd, and some of his other admirers amongst the English clergy; but he reserved the full elucidation of it to the ninth book of the Divine Legation of Moses, which was published by Bishop Hurd after his death, as a supplement to his works. This ninth book, which professes to be an attempt to explain the nature and genius of the Christian religion, and "to furnish the key or clue which is to open to us, and to lead us through all the recesses and intricacies of the last dispensation of God," unfolds with much pomp, but with a very slender degree of evidence, the following system, the amount of which may be

given in a few words. Warburton considers pardon on repentance as a doctrine of natural religion, which is published indeed in the Gospel, but which did not in any measure depend upon the vicarious sacrifice of Christ, because the law of nature teaches us that repentance is the means of recovering the favour of God, when it has been forfeited by a breach of that law. So far he coincides with the Socinians. But he differs from them in asserting, and in proving most ably, that the death of Christ was truly a vicarious sacrifice; and the peculiarity of his system lies in his finding room for the necessity of such a sacrifice, although he contends, that from the principles of natural religion it may be collected that God will, on the sincere repentance of offenders, receive them again into favour. The place which he finds for it is this. Immortal life, he says, is a thing extraneous to our nature; not necessarily inferred from the relation between the Creator and the creature; and no part of the natural reward of good conduct. It was not conferred upon man when he was first created, but was the sanction of that particular covenant which God made with our first parents some time after their creation; when he placed them in the garden of Eden. It is a free gift which was originally suspended upon the condition of obeying a positive command, which was forfeited by the transgression of that command, and which is restored in the Gospel. The whole character of the Gospel, according to Warburton, lies in this, that it is the restoration of the free gift of immortality; and faith in the blood of the Son of God is the positive command, upon which God the giver has been pleased to suspend his gift. Abstinence from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was the condition of the original grant; faith in the blood of the Son of God, as a vicarious sacrifice, is the condition upon which the restoration of the grant is suspended; both are positive commands, deriving all their value from the pleasure of him who appointed them, but for that very reason both are indispensable conditions of the gift.

If there is any truth in the principles upon which we rested the doctrine of atonement, this account of the Gospel is a most incomplete theory; and I have mentioned it only because the contrast may serve to illustrate that part of the Catholic opinion which I am now going to state.

In Warburton's system, the gift of immortality which was purchased by the sufferings of Christ is detached from the pardon preached in his name, the former being peculiar to the Gospel, the latter being the common doctrine of natural religion; and redemption and justification are appropriated, in this system, to the price paid and accepted for the particular gift of eternal life, without being supposed to have any reference to the means of restoring the sinner to the favour of God in general. The Catholic opinion, on the other hand, takes the gift of eternal life, which is the termination of the remedy, in connexion with all the steps that prepare and qualify us for the termination; and, by thus embracing the whole of the Gospel revelation, instead of forming a system upon a partial view, it both appears to give a natural interpretation of the separate branches, and also derives much support from the harmony with which they unite.

There is not in this part of the Catholic opinion that opposition to other systems which we found in the former part. The Catholic opinion agrees with the Socinian as to the promise of eternal life, which God has given us in Christ; with the middle as to the power of the Redeemer in conferring it; with Warburton's system as to the free restoration of that which had been forfeited, and could not be claimed. But it differs from all the three in comprehending points which they omit, and in marking connexions which they overlook; and therefore, I have not here to engage in that kind of controversial discussion which was necessary in stating the doctrine of atonement, but merely to give a delineation of what those who hold the Catholic opinion consider as a complete account of the nature of the Gospel remedy.

The foundation of the hope of eternal life is laid in what the Scriptures call reconciliation. For if all men are under the sentence of condemnation, and so children of wrath, that sentence must be reversed in order to their being delivered from wrath, before they can look forward with the expectation of good to other states of being. This order is beautifully stated by the Apostle Paul in several passages, such as the following. Rom. v. 1, 2, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by

faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." The condemnation pronounced upon the first transgression included a sentence of death; "dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return;" a sentence which, although not immediately executed upon the transgressors, has ever since retained its power over their posterity; for death, which entered into the world by sin, διηλθε, passeth upon all men. If this event, which withdraws men from their abode upon earth, and puts an end to the present exertion of their faculties, were in reality, what it appears to be, the termination of their existence, the evils introduced by sin could not be said to receive a remedy, because this part of the sentence of condemnation, although suspended for a little, would in the end be fully executed. The Gospel, therefore, professing to bring a remedy for these evils, and yet not professing to deliver men from returning to the dust, reveals a resurrection of the body from the dust, with which it is mingled after death, and thus opens to man the possibility of receiving hereafter, in his whole nature, that complete remedy which is not administered here. This prolongation of existence, beyond the period when it is forfeited by that sentence to which all the posterity of Adam are subject, may be stated as the first branch of the reversal of the sentence; and in the New Testament it is uniformly ascribed to the interposition of Jesus. Heb. ii. 14, "He took part of flesh and blood ἱνα δια του θανατου καταργησῃ τον τοκρατος εχοντα του θανατου, τουτεστι τον διαβολον; that through death he might render unavailing the power of him who has the power of death." 2 Tim. i. 10, καταργησαντος μεν του θανατον, φωτισαντος δε ζωην και αφθαρσιαν δια του ευαγγελιου. 1 Cor. xv. 57, "Thanks be to God who hath given us the victory over death through our Lord Jesus Christ."

It is not meant by these expressions that the world had no hope of immortality till Jesus came. From the beginning of the world, in all countries, and in every state of society, men have looked forward to another life. Although the promise of life eternal formed no part of the sanction of the law of Moses, yet the hope of such a life is often expressed in the Psalms, and by the prophets: it had become a part of the national faith of the Jews before Jesus came,

and we find both our Lord and his Apostles adducing proofs of a future state out of their ancient Scriptures. Jesus, therefore, is said to have brought life and immortality to light, not that he was the first who taught it,—not merely because his manner of teaching it was free from the obscurity and hesitation which appeared in every former teacher who spoke of this subject,—but principally because that which he did took away the obstacle which no other had power to remove. Death intervenes by a judicial sentence between the present life and that future life for which man looks. No other teacher had authority to say that this judicial sentence would be reversed by a restoration of the life which it took away. But Jesus, having by his death procured an acquittal from the sentence, renders death ineffectual for the purpose of preventing the future life of man; so that immortality when taught by him may be as readily embraced and as firmly believed as if death did not intervene.

But, although an acquittal from the sentence of death is necessary in order to our future existence, the hope of what we call life eternal does not necessarily arise from this acquittal. For mere existence in a future state, even when supposed to be free from those pains which would render it a curse instead of a blessing, does not satisfy the desires of the human soul. In looking forward to other states of being, it pants for enjoying there the happiness of its nature; and it is manifest that there is a wide difference between a prolongation of life after it had been forfeited, and a right to the greatest blessing which the Father of spirits can bestow—the perpetual enjoyment in his presence of those benefits which he may resume when he will, and of a measure of them supposed to be infinitely superior to all that he is seen at present to bestow. It is agreed, therefore, by Christians of all denominations, that what we call eternal life is the gift of God; an expression which they have learnt from the Apostle Paul, who uses it in a situation which shows that he meant to give it all its significancy. Rom. vi. 20. "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God, το χαρισμα του Θεου, is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." The hope of a gift does not go beyond probability without a promise from the giver; and therefore all Christians agree in considering eternal life as the

promise which God hath promised us. But those who hold the Catholic opinion are distinguished from the Socinians, by connecting this promise with that which Christ has done, *i. e.* by considering this gift of God as not only promised to men by Jesus Christ, but as given them upon his account. In this respect the Catholic and the middle opinions appear to agree. But while the middle opinion considers this gift as conferred by the power of the Redeemer upon those whom he chooses to make the partners of his reward, the Catholic opinion establishes a more intimate connexion between our right to eternal life, and that which was done by our Saviour upon earth.

Concerning the nature of this connexion, there is some variety in the language of those who hold the Catholic opinion. A distinction has been made between the passive and the active obedience of Christ. Those who made the distinction understood by the passive obedience of Christ, all the sufferings which he underwent for our sins; by his active obedience, all the piety, resignation, humility, and benevolence, which rendered his life the most perfect pattern of righteousness. The former being penal were considered as the satisfaction to the justice of God; the latter, being a fulfilment of the law which says, "the man that doeth them shall live in them," were considered as meritorious of a reward. It was said therefore, that we are saved from wrath by the sufferings of Christ, and that we acquire a right to eternal life through the merits of his obedience. But, in this, as in many other instances, an attempt was made to distinguish things naturally indivisible. The passive and the active obedience of Christ cannot be disjoined. For in all that Jesus suffered there was obedience to God and good will to man, and the virtues of his character were illustrated and enhanced by the situation in which he displayed them.

The great body of Catholic divines, therefore, have followed the sacred writers, to whom this distinction is altogether unknown. They generally ascribe our redemption to the blood of Christ, because his death was the most illustrious act of obedience, and the conclusion of the life which for our sakes he had led upon earth; but they show us by various expressions, that they do not exclude the efficacy of the sorrows and the virtues of that life. Thus

the Apostle says, Rom. v. 19 " By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous;" an expression which does not, as those who hold the middle opinion maintain, resolve the sufferings which we call penal merely into a virtuous exertion, but which conjoins this last act with all the submission to God displayed by Jesus from his incarnation μεχρι θανατου. Phil. ii. 8. In like manner, the Scriptures, in order to show that the efficacy of the death of Christ was not confined to the deliverance from punishment, which is generally spoken of as the immediate effect of that event, represent it in different places as having procured for us also eternal life. Heb. ix. 12, 15, " By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. He is the mediator of the new testament, that, by means of death, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." 1 Thess. v. 9, 10, " Christ died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep," *i. e.* whether we be found alive or dead at the general resurrection, " we should live together with him."

Thus, in the language of the New Testament, Acts xxvi. 18, αφεσις αμαρτιων and κληρος εν τοις ηγιασμενοις are conjoined as flowing together from the interposition of Christ: and agreeably to this language, the active and passive obedience of Christ, words seldom used in modern times, are considered as constituting together what are called his merits,—what the Apostle, Rom. v. 18, calls δι' δικαιωμα, which he opposes to the δι' παραπτωμα of Adam. He does not mean one single act of Jesus, but the merit or righteousness arising out of all his actions and all his sufferings taken in one complex view, through which righteousness the free gift comes upon all men, εις δικαιωσιν ζωης. For Jesus, who was infinitely blessed and glorious in himself, and who, possessing all things from the beginning, was incapable of receiving a personal reward, undertook that economy which the Scriptures reveal for our sakes; and all the merit arising out of the execution of it is imputed or transferred to us, *i. e.* counted as ours, so that we derive the benefit of it. He was made " sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." 2 Cor. v. 21. The same thing is expressed, Gal. iv. 4, 5. Jesus was made under the law in two respects; in respect of the

sanction of the law, the curse due to transgressors which he endured, and in respect of the precepts both of the ceremonial and of the moral law which he fulfilled. In his sufferings and in his actions, he did the will of his Father; and this obedience, being yielded in the human nature which he assumed in order to accomplish our deliverance, is considered as yielded in our stead and for our sakes: the merit of it is counted to those to whom the remedy of the Gospel is applied, so that upon account of it we are both delivered from the curse of the law, and "receive the adoption of sons." This last expression, which is commonly used in the New Testament to mark the change produced upon the condition of Christians by Christ's having made peace, manifestly includes that right to eternal life which they acquire through him. From enemies they become "children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." Heaven is the house of their Father, their city, their country, or, as our Lord has expressed it, "the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world," which they are called to inherit.

But, if that account of the effect of Adam's transgression upon which the Catholic opinion proceeds be founded in Scripture, his posterity are not qualified to take possession of this inheritance. The corruption which they inherit from their ancestor, being an estrangement from the fountain of life, upon which account it is known by the name of spiritual death, is diametrically opposite to that intimate communion with God implied in life eternal; and as this corruption is sufficient, independently of all outward evils, to make men wretched upon earth, so, if it were carried with them beyond the grave, they would find, even in that state where pure spirits enjoy supreme felicity, the misery inseparable from sin. That the remedy, therefore, may correspond to the extent of the disease, and that Jesus may truly accomplish the purpose for which it is said he was manifested by destroying the works of the devil, it is not enough that he abolished death, or rendered death ineffectual for preventing the future life of man, and purchased by his merits an everlasting reward; his religion must also confer upon his followers those qualifications and dispositions by which they may be meet

for entering into life. Whether this change upon the character of men is accomplished by the moral influence of doctrine, precept, and example, or by the efficacious influence of the Spirit, and how this last, which the Scriptures seem to declare, can be reconciled with that liberty which enters into all our conceptions of an accountable agent, are questions which belong to that division of our subject which I called the application of the remedy. But that there is such a change, in whatever manner it be effected, is unequivocally declared in such expressions as the following. All those whom Christ delivers from punishment, and to whom he gives a right to eternal life, are "made free from sin;" they "become the servants of God;" they "put off the old man which is corrupt;" they "put on the new man which is renewed after the image of God;" they are "dead unto sin, and alive unto God through Jesus Christ; a peculiar people, zealous of good works."* These expressions, and many others of the same kind, paint a character of mind, and a general tenor of life, which constitute the beauty, the health, and dignity of the human soul, and from which there result that "peace which passeth all understanding" here, and the capacity of enjoying supreme felicity hereafter.

From what has been said the propriety is evident, with which the two words salvation and redemption are employed to denote eternal life purchased by Christ; as Heb. v. 9, "being made perfect he became the author of eternal salvation, αιτιος σωτηριας αιωνιου, unto all them that obey him." And Heb. ix. 12, "having obtained eternal redemption, αιωνιαν λυτρωσιν ευραμενος." As the happiness of heaven is obtained for us in the same manner with the acquittal from the sentence of condemnation, and is the entire removal of the evils which sin had introduced, this completion of the undertaking of the Redeemer is most fitly designed by the words which primarily denoted the acquittal: and the epithet αιωνιος is significant of the very same thing which John has expressed in his description of the city of the living God, where the tree of life grows, the leaves of which are for the healing of the nations; Rev. xxii. 3, Και παν καταναθεμα ουκ εσται ετι; *i. e.* the curse pronounced upon man, when he was driven from the tree

* Rom vi. Ephes. iv. 21—24. Titus ii. 13, 14.

of life, is completely removed when he is re-admitted to it, and it shall return no more.

Thus Jesus, by giving what is called Rev. xxii. 14, "a right to the tree of life," does indeed destroy the works of the devil: he is the second Adam, who restores all that the first had forfeited; and the completeness of the remedy which he brought cannot be better expressed than in the words of Paul, Rom. v. 21, "that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

We have now seen the manner in which the hope of eternal life, or a right to the tree of life, is connected with what Christ did upon earth. But a right so infinitely above their deserts, conferred by the free grace of God upon those who were under sentence of condemnation, transcends all our experience of the divine goodness, and all our conceptions of generosity: and therefore, "God, willing to show more abundantly unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel," hath confirmed this right by all the discoveries given in Scripture of the present condition of that person from whose merits it is derived.

The resurrection of Jesus may be mentioned as the first branch of the confirmation of that right acquired for us by his death. Had Jesus, after dying for our sins, continued under the power of the grave, doubts must have arisen in every mind impressed with a sense of guilt, whether his blood was able to take away the sins of the world. But when all the sufferings which he endured as the punishment of sin were concluded by his being restored to life, here was a fact presented to the senses of mankind, containing plain and incontestible evidence that the effects ascribed to his sufferings were attained; because the Supreme Lawgiver, in loosing him from the pains of death, declared that he accepted that atonement which his death offered. Accordingly, it is said, Rom. iv. 25, that Christ "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification:" *i. e.* we know by his resurrection that we who had offended are, upon account of his sufferings, accounted righteous before God; and it is said, 1 Pet. i. 3, that "God hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead;" *i. e.* his resurrection is an experimental assurance of our victory over death.

But the Scriptures reveal much more than the resurrection of Jesus, or his bare return to life: and the full security given in the Gospel for our attaining the exalted reward, which is included in the complete redemption procured by his death, is found in all the circumstances that are revealed concerning the life which he now lives with God. For if, as the apostle reasons, Rom. v. 10, "when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more being reconciled we shall be saved by his life;" *i. e.* if his death had the effect of propitiating the divine wrath, much more shall his life insure eternal salvation to those who are now no longer enemies. Eternal life having been acquired for us by the death of Christ, and yet being a distant reward, the Gospel affords us this most satisfying security for its being at length conferred, that the person who died to acquire it is alive for evermore, and has the keys of hell and of death.*

It is not necessary, in this place, to dwell upon the illustration of the various points which belong to this subject. I shall only bring them together in one view, to show distinctly how they unite in constituting that security of which I now speak.

Jesus Christ, who gave his flesh for the life of the world, is himself the giver of life. He is revealed as the Creator of the worlds, from whom the life of all the inhabitants of the earth originally proceeded. He displayed upon earth the power of raising from the dead whom he would; he directs us to consider these occasional exertions as a specimen of that power with which he shall raise all men at the last day; and he says that "power is given him over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as the Father hath given him."† There can be no doubt, therefore, that the Son of God, "who hath life in himself, is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him."

That he is willing to exert his power in giving eternal life to those whom he redeemed, is an inference clearly deduced from his death. A Being, who did the will of the Father, in dying that we might live through him, who revived that he might be Lord of all, and whose purposes do

* Rev. i. 17, 18. † John xvii. 2.

not admit of alteration, either from the mutability of his own mind, or from external opposition, cannot be conceived to leave unfinished the gracious purpose for which he suffered, but will in due time put us in possession of the right which he acquired for us at such a price.

The force of this inference is illustrated by the various language in which the Scriptures express the intimate connexion between Christ and the persons for whom he died. They are those whom God hath given him; the subjects of his kingdom; the members of his body; the flock which he gathers into his fold, and which he defends from every enemy; his sheep who hear the voice of the good shepherd, and follow him. In the felicity which this peculiar people, whom he hath purchased for himself by his own blood, attain through him, he sees the travail of his soul; and the praises which are represented in the book of the Revelation, as proceeding from the company which he hath redeemed to God, publish the glory of his name to the whole intelligent creation. He was not ashamed to call them brethren, for he took part with them of flesh and blood; and even now that he is set down on the right hand of God, he has not laid aside the nature which he assumed; for he is still called the Son of Man. He appears in the presence of God for us, a merciful and faithful high priest; and touched with the feeling of our infirmities, he maketh intercession for us, and is our advocate with the Father. Not that he uses any words to move God; but that, in virtue of the blood which he shed on the cross, and with which he is said now to sprinkle the mercy-seat in heaven, he procured us access to the Father, and presents our prayers and services, which, when offered in his name, are "spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by him."

The high priest of the Jews entering upon the day of atonement into the holy of holies, with the blood of the bullock and the goat, and with the names of the children of Israel upon his breastplate, was a striking type of the intercession of Christ. But there are two essential points in which the antitype excels the type. The one is, that the high priest of the Jews entered once a-year upon a stated day; but the intercession of Jesus continueth ever, (Heb. vii. 24, 23.) so that at all times we may "come

boldly to the throne of grace." The other is, that none but the high priest ever entered; whereas Jesus, who entered into the true holy place, after having obtained eternal redemption, has, by his entering, opened and made manifest a way for us. He is our forerunner, πρόδρομος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, Heb. vi. 20; our hope "entereth into that within the vail," whither he is gone; and although we yet remain in the outer court while he is making intercession, we know assuredly from his words, that where he is, there shall also his servants be.* This assurance is confirmed by the nature of the blessings which his intercession procures. When he ascended on high he received gifts for men, which are continually imparted to those who derive from him a right to eternal life. The Holy Spirit, by whom these gifts are distributed, is called the Spirit of Jesus, and is said to be sent by him:† and he is not only the source of comfort, and the cherisher of hope, but he is expressly styled, Eph. i. 14, ἀρραβὼν τῆς κληρονομίας ἡμῶν, "the earnest of our inheritance." The significancy of this expression will appear by attending to the difference between an earnest and a pledge. A pledge is a security for some future payment, which is delivered up as soon as the payment is made; and therefore it may be, and generally is, of a kind totally different from the payment. An earnest is a part of the payment given as an acknowledgment that the whole is due, the same in kind with that which is to follow. In this sense the Spirit is called the earnest of our inheritance, because the life formed upon earth by the influences of the Spirit is the temper of heaven already begun in the soul. It is much more than a preparation for heaven: it is an assurance which a Christian has within himself, given to him by the Lord of life, that he shall certainly reach heaven. For as the apostle speaks, Col. iii. 3, 4, that life which we lead is supported by the invisible influences of the Spirit, whom Christ, who sits on the right hand of God, sends into the hearts of his people. The springs of this life are withdrawn from the eyes of men; but they are hidden with Christ; and they will become manifest at that time, when he by whom we live shall appear, and we, who have risen with him to a new life, shall be partakers of his glory.

* John xiv. 3. † 1 Pet. i. 11. John xv. 26.

While Christians are thus sealed by the Spirit unto the day of redemption, Jesus is in heaven preparing a place for them. He directs by the power that is committed to him every event for the good of that church which he purchased for himself; and when all the purposes of divine Providence are accomplished, he shall be revealed from heaven as the judge of men. We are to appear before the tribunal of him who died, that we might live, and we are to receive from his hands the crown of life.

The particulars which I have now brought together, unfold the full amount of that expression of Peter, "Thou hast the words of eternal life:"* and of that expression of John, "This is the record, that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son."† It was purchased for us by him; the power of conferring it resides in him; he prepares us for it, and he will at length bestow it.

From this view of the connexion between the hope of eternal life and the interposition of Christ, there arises also the significancy of that name which is given to him, the mediator of the New Testament, the mediator between God and man; μεσιτης. Heb. ix. 15. 1 Tim. ii. 6. He is not merely *Inter-nuncius Dei*, the messenger who, coming from God to man, declared the divine purpose; but he is a person, who, standing in the middle between God and his offending creatures, offers on our part a satisfaction to the divine justice, and brings us from God an assurance that the satisfaction is accepted. He becomes in this way, Heb. vii. 22, κρειττονος διαθηκης εγγυος, the surety of a better covenant, which being confirmed by the death of the surety, acquires the nature of a testament, an irrevocable deed, because the death loses its effect unless the blessings of the covenant are conferred upon those for whom the surety died. Yet by his reviving after he died, he becomes himself the dispenser of these blessings, and is in this most eminent sense a mediator, that having procured us access to the Father by his death, he ever lives to make intercession. His mediation is effectual, because it proceeds upon the merit of what he did for our sakes; all the riches of divine grace are connected with this merit; and the nature of the Gospel remedy may be thus de-

* John vi. 68. † 1 John v. 11.

scribed according to the Catholic opinion:—it is pardon and eternal life, or a complete redemption from the evils of sin, obtained and conferred through the mediation of a person, who having offered himself a sacrifice for sin, and being now set down at the right hand of God, is emphatically styled "the Captain of Salvation, the author and finisher of faith."

To those who have a slight impression of the nature of that condition which called for the remedy, there may appear to be a superfluity of condescension in this mediation. But they who think of the fears and suspicions which are natural to guilt, which are often described in Scripture, and which are there confirmed by an awful exhibition of the punitive justice of the Lawgiver, will perceive the utility and fitness of all that provision which is made for overcoming the distrust and reviving the hopes of those who are justified by the blood of Christ. By the gracious condescending views which are given of the present condition of that person who died for sins, in order to procure for men the most glorious reward, the Gospel becomes the religion of those to whom it is addressed, the humble, the contrite, the poor in spirit; and by Jesus, we "believe in God, who raised his Son from the dead, and gave him glory, that our faith and hope might be in God."*

* 1 Pet. i. 21.

CHAPTER V.

EXTENT OF THE REMEDY.

HAVING treated of the nature of the remedy which the Gospel brings, I proceed now to give an account of the different opinions which have been held concerning the extent of that remedy. But before I enter upon the controverted questions on this subject, I wish to direct your attention to two preliminary points. In the first all Christians agree; and the differences respecting the second do not distinguish any great bodies of Christians, but are confined to a few individuals.

SECTION I.

THE first preliminary point is, that the Gospel appears framed and designed by God to be the religion of the whole human race.

As the Almighty Father made of one blood all nations to dwell upon the face of the earth, we cannot suppose that the paternal affection, with which he looked down upon those whom he formed after his own image, will be in the smallest degree affected by the varieties of climate and situation; and all the conceptions of enlightened reason lead us to presume, that if their moral state render them the objects of his compassion, the exercise of that compassion will not be bounded by any lines so capricious as those

which the confines of different states mark upon the globe. Accordingly the declaration made by the Almighty immediately after the first transgression intimates, by the form of the expression, an idea most becoming the sovereignty of Him who speaks, that all the children of Adam were somehow to partake of the fruits of that victory which the seed of the woman was to gain over the tempter; and the promise made to Abraham, that in his seed all the families of the earth were to be blessed, conveys the most explicit assurance, that, at some future time, a dispensation, commensurate in extent with the population of the earth, was to proceed from the descendants of Abraham.

The dispensation given by Moses to the posterity of the patriarch was of a very different kind. It was confined, by the terms of its promulgation, to the land of Judea: the various ceremonies which it prescribed were, such as the inhabitants of countries remote from Jerusalem could not perform; and the object of all the institutions was to preserve, in a small district, a peculiar people, holy unto the Lord; while the rest of the world were left in ignorance and idolatry. The partiality, from which this local dispensation appears at first sight to have flowed, is a favourite subject of declamation with deistical writers. It is stated as an unanswerable proof that the Jewish religion is unworthy of the Supreme Being. The boasted peculiarity of the children of Israel is ranked by these writers amongst the other forms of superstition, which national vanity and a concurrence of circumstances maintained for ages in particular districts; and as Jesus and his apostles assert the divine authority of Moses, and build Christianity upon the law given by him, their claims of being the messengers of heaven are represented as very much shaken by this degradation of Judaism.

This plausible objection is fully answered in all the able defences of Christianity; particularly by Leland, in his View of Deistical Writers, and by Clarke, both in his Evidences of Religion, and in some of his Sermons. The subject is also treated in Shaw's Philosophy of Judaism; in Shaw's Considerations on the Theory of Religion; in Jortin's Discourses on the Truth of the Christian Religion; in Warburton's Divine Legation of Moses; and in various treatises on the harmony of the divine dispensations. I

shall endeavour to state, in a short compass, the idea which these writers have fully elucidated.

The children of Israel were not distinguished by a special revelation upon account of any peculiar excellence of character, which rendered them, more than other nations, the objects of the divine favour; but they were raised up, in the wisdom of Providence, as the instruments of preserving in the world, amidst abounding idolatry, the knowledge and worship of the true God, and of conveying to future ages the hope of that Deliverer who had been promised from the beginning. To qualify them for this important office, they were separated from the surrounding heathen by circumcision, by a burdensome ritual, and by many express prohibitions against intermarrying with their neighbours. But it was not meant that they should remain unknown. The geographical situation of the land, which God had given them, brought them within the view of those nations who make the most conspicuous figure in ancient history. The commerce which they were obliged to maintain with other nations, the fortunes of some individuals of that chosen race, and many circumstances in the history of the nation, particularly their captivities and their dispersions, drew the attention of the world to the singularities of their establishment. Some knowledge of their law was, by these means, carried abroad; and from the land of Judea, as from a light shining in a dark place, there proceeded rays, which, in the midst of heathen superstition, prevented the darkness from being universal. It is difficult to estimate the degree of aid which the efforts of human reason derived from the revelation granted to the people of Israel. But the researches of Bryant, in his Ancient Mythology, and of other learned men, seem to place it beyond doubt, that this aid was more considerable than a superficial uninformed observer would apprehend. And when we consider the successive changes in the political state of the Jews, and the situation of the Roman empire at the time of the birth of that extraordinary personage, of whom there had been a general expectation, there appears to be the best reason for regarding the whole conduct of the Almighty towards his chosen people, as part of that preparation by which he opened to the world the universal and spiritual religion, which, in the fulness

of time, was published by his Son,—a preparation, which in none of its parts was so rapid as to our imaginations may appear desirable, but which it would be presumptuous in us, upon that account, to pronounce unsuitable to the circumstances of the case.

The law of Moses, then, was a local dispensation intervening between the promise made to Abraham, that in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed, and the fulfilment of the promise. It originated in the promise; it announced the great event, which was the accomplishment of the promise, and it terminated with that event. A great part of the study of a Christian divine lies in tracing the connexion between the preparatory dispensation, and that to which it pointed; and the more intimately that he is acquainted with this connexion, the better able will he be to vindicate the God of the Jews from the charge of partiality. One thing is obvious, that this narrow confined religion gave notice of a dispensation that was to be universal. David says, in Psalm xxii. which is a continued prophecy of the Messiah, "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the Lord; all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him;" and the Jewish prophets intimate, by various expressions, that the partial instruction, which the law of Moses afforded, was to be succeeded by a kind of teaching not confined to any one people, but under which nations that had been strangers to the true God were to know and worship him.

It is true that the national vanity of the Jews, flattered by their peculiar privileges, gave other interpretations of such prophecies. They either conceived that the dispensation of the Messiah, by subjecting the nations of the earth to their dominion, was to exalt them to the empire of the world, then held by the Romans; or, if their minds did rise to some conception of a spiritual change upon the world, it went no further than this, that other nations were to exchange the idolatry in which they had been educated for an observance of the ceremonies given of old from Mount Sinai. They did not think that the chosen people of God could ever be made to descend to that equality with the heathen, which is implied in supposing that the offerings made in other countries are as acceptable to God as those presented at Jerusalem. Far less did it occur to

their minds that the whole city was to be laid waste, and the temple of Solomon razed to the ground; and that this effectual abolition of the ceremonies of the law was to prepare the world for receiving a spiritual religion, clearly discriminated from that local system. These prejudices of the Jews, founded upon a literal interpretation of their own sacred books, and possessing the minds of all ranks, required much attention at the first publication of the Gospel. For Jesus appeared as the Messiah of the Jews, claiming to be that son of David whom their prophets had described as a mighty prince; and his religion, deriving a great part of its internal evidence from its perfect consistency with that former revelation of which it is the fulfilment, was to go forth from Judea to enlighten the ends of the earth. The order of Providence, then, required that Christianity should be preached first to the Jews; and it was necessary that, if they did not embrace the promise made to their fathers, the manner of its being preached to them should be such as to render their infidelity inexcusable, and to vindicate the justice of the severe punishment ordained for their nation.

This is the key to a great part of the New Testament; and I do not know any views which persons who expound the Scriptures to the people have more frequent occasion to bring forward and to apply, than those which I have now stated. From these views we derive the reason of our Lord's confining his personal ministry to the Jews, and forbidding the apostles, when he sent them forth during his abode upon earth, to go into the way of the Gentiles. From hence we are able to account for the slow opening of the universal character of Christianity; and we learn to admire the skill and address with which our Lord employed general expressions, parables, and action, gradually to unfold this offensive truth. The name by which he commonly designed himself, "the Son of Man," was most expressive of his connexion with the whole human race. In his discourses with the Jews, he frequently called himself the light of the world, and many words dropped from him, which, howsoever they were understood by his hearers, appear to us intended to mark the full extent of his gracious undertaking.* "Other sheep I have which

* Mat. viii. 11.

are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd." "I, if I be lifted up," referring to the manner of his death on the cross, "will draw all men to me."* Several of his parables convey under a thin disguise the future extension of his kingdom, the rejection of those who thought they had an exclusive title to its privileges, and the introduction of those whom the Jews held in contempt.† Our Lord began his public ministry at Jerusalem by driving the buyers and sellers out of the temple; and he repeated this action a little before his crucifixion. The action appears to an ordinary reader to be merely a transport of zeal. But if you read the enlightened commentary of Bishop Hurd at the end of the first volume of his sermons, you will regard it in a much higher light, as a symbolical action, intimating in the most significant manner that the house of God was to become, under the Christian dispensation, a house of prayer for all nations. The only place in the temple allotted for the devout heathen, or proselytes of the gate, who chose to come up to Jerusalem, that they might there worship the God of Israel, was an outer court, in which many things necessary for the service of the temple were exposed to sale. Our Lord, by driving the buyers and sellers out of this court, vindicated the rights of the Gentiles, who had been insulted during their devotions by the uproar of a fair; and although he did not proceed so far as to bring them into the sanctuary, yet by this mark of his attention he gave a pledge of the fulness of that grace which was soon to be revealed to them.

Accordingly the commission given to the apostles immediately before his ascension, was unlimited. "Go, make disciples of all nations. Ye shall be witnesses to me unto the uttermost part of the earth. And he said unto them, that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."‡ The gift of tongues, conferred upon them ten days after his ascension, qualified them for executing this unlimited commission: and the miracles, which they were enabled to perform, constituted an evidence of their

* John x. 16; xii. 32. † Mat. xx. xxi. xxii.
‡ Mat. xxviii. 19. Acts i. 8. Luke xxiv. 46, 47.

divine mission equally intelligible to men in all countries, and fitted to bring universal conviction. Paul, who was added to the number of the apostles after the ascension of Jesus, was told by a special revelation at the time of his conversion, that he was to be sent far from Jerusalem to the Gentiles ;* and Acts x. relates the manner in which the minds of the other apostles, who still retained many of the prejudices of the Jews, were opened to conceive the true character of the Gospel, and to understand the extent of their own commission. Peter was instructed in a vision not to call that unclean which God hath cleansed; he then received a command to preach the Gospel to Cornelius, a devout heathen; and his preaching was accompanied with a descent of the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost upon Cornelius and his family. These three circumstances, the vision, the command, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost, appeared to the other apostles to constitute a full vindication of his conduct; and although they had blamed Peter when they first heard of his going in to the Gentiles, they were satisfied, after he expounded to them the whole matter, that by the Gospel there is "granted to the Gentiles also repentance unto life."

As soon as this enlarged idea took possession of their minds, it formed one great subject of their discourses and their writings; and we see them labouring to bring it forth to the admiration of the world. While Paul avails himself of his Jewish learning to prove that the Gospel is the end of the law, his epistles abound with the declaration of that mystery, *i. e.* that part of the conduct of divine Providence formerly unknown, which had been revealed to him, that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and partakers of the same promise in Christ by the Gospel. He magnifies the grace of God, who now appears not the God of the Jews, but the God of the Gentiles also, "rich in mercy to all that call upon him;" and he dwells upon this distinguishing excellence of the Gospel, that under it there is neither Jew nor Greek, circumcision nor uncircumcision, but that Christ is all in all. The Evangelist John, who wrote his Gospel long after the rest, in relating a saying of Caiaphas the high priest, adds these

* Acts xxii. 21.

words of himself, that Jesus Christ "should die not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God which were scattered abroad;"* and in the book of the Revelation, where he writes by the commandment of Jesus the things shown to him in vision which were to be hereafter, he mentions an angel whom he saw flying in heaven, having the Gospel to preach to them that dwell upon the earth; and he says, that he beheld a great multitude of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb.†

I have thought it of importance thus to bring together, in one view, the Scripture account of Christianity as an universal religion,—as offering a remedy which, in this respect, corresponds to the disease, that it is not confined to any one nation, but may be embraced by men of every country. It is a branch of the evidence of Christianity, that there is nothing in its nature to prevent the universal publication of it, and that there is a tendency in the general course of things to bring about this event. And although the accomplishment of the prediction, that it is to be preached to all nations, has been delayed, there cannot fairly be drawn by reasoning or analogy any presumption that the prediction will never be accomplished. We are thus warranted to apply to the Christian religion that character which it assumes to itself as the religion of mankind; we discern one sense in which it may with propriety be said that "God will have all men to be saved, and that Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world;" and we perceive the significancy of the expression of Paul, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

SECTION II.

THE second preliminary point is, that the extent of the remedy brought in the Gospel is limited by the terms in

* John xi. 49—52. † Rev. xiv. 6; vii. 9.

which it is offered. As Jesus gave his apostles a commission to preach repentance and remission of sins in his name among all nations, they executed their commission in such words as these, "Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." "I testified," says Paul, "both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ."*

From these passages, which accord with the general strain of the New Testament, it seems to follow, that the Gospel, which is the religion of sinners, and professes to bring a remedy for the evils of sin, is a remedy only to those who repent and believe. Although different sects of Christians, therefore, may disagree as to the description of repentance and faith, as to the manner in which they are produced, and the connexion between them and the efficacy of what Christ did; it does not appear possible that any sect which receives the Scriptures can deny that a certain character or state of mind, which is there expressed by repentance and faith, is required in all who partake of the remedy, and consequently that the extent of the remedy is limited by this requisition.

This acknowledged point, that whosoever repents and believes shall be saved, is the great subject of preaching: and as it is the only point respecting the extent of the remedy, which is clearly and incontrovertibly revealed in Scripture, so it is of infinitely greater importance than all the controverted points. They are matters of speculation, upon which it is natural for the human mind to form some opinion. The opinion may be more or less agreeable to the most rational conceptions of the divine attributes, to the views incidentally given in Scripture, and to the great end of Christianity. There is truth or error, there is consistency or inconsistency in the sentiments entertained upon this as upon all other subjects; and as the Church of Scotland has adopted a particular system of opinions concerning the extent of the remedy, it is decent and fit that those who desire to be her ministers should be well acquainted with the grounds of that system. But it is not

* Acts iii. 19; xvi. 31; xx. 21.

necessary that these grounds, or that the system itself, should be explained to the people. We fulfil the office which is committed to the ministers of the Gospel, when we call our hearers to repent and believe, in order that they may be saved; and all those teachers who agree as to the character of the person by whom the remedy was brought, and as to the nature of the remedy, may discharge this duty with the same fidelity and the same energy, although they differ in their speculations as to many points that respect the extent of the remedy.

The Socinians, who differ from all other Christians as to the nature of the remedy, cannot be expected to agree with them as to the extent of it. Considering the pardon of those who repent as flowing from the essential goodness of God, without reference to any thing that Christ has done, they must conceive that pardon is dispensed at all times, and in all places, with equal liberality; and considering eternal life not as purchased by Jesus Christ, but as the free gift of God to creatures naturally mortal, they conceive that this gift will be bestowed upon all virtuous men that have lived from the beginning of the world, under any dispensation of religion. They allow that Christianity was of great advantage to the world by bringing assurance of these truths; and that those who lived in the ancient world were in the same situation with the inhabitants of countries where the Gospel has never been published, without that comfort under a consciousness of infirmities, and those incitements to well-doing which Christians may derive from the Gospel. But if, on this account merely, they fail in their duty, their situation will plead indulgence for their failings; and if they attain nearly the same degree of virtue as Christians, without the same advantages, they are still better entitled to partake of that exuberant grace by which our Father in heaven rewards the services of his children.

There is a system with regard to the nature of the remedy, which considers the loss of immortality as the only forfeiture incurred by the sin of Adam, and the restoration of forfeited life as the blessing purchased by Christ. Those who hold this system are led by their principles to consider the purchase of the second Adam as of the same extent with the forfeiture of the first: they allow, with the

Socinians, that those who never heard of Christianity are destitute of many advantages for the improvement of their minds which that revelation affords; but they do not conceive that the extent of the remedy is, in any measure, dependent upon the extent of the publication. They bring down the effect of the death of Christ to a right which he has acquired of giving immortality to a race of beings by whom it had been forfeited, and they look upon an universal resurrection as the accomplishment of his undertaking.

If both these systems are essentially defective as to the nature of the remedy, there must also be a defect in their manner of stating the extent of it. Christians who consider the death of Christ as an atonement, upon account of which the sins of those that repent are forgiven, have many points to take into view before they can determine the manner in which this atonement reaches either those to whom it has been preached, or those to whom it has not. But although we are not yet prepared for stating that system with regard to the condition of persons who have not heard of the Gospel, which results from the Catholic opinion concerning the nature of the remedy, it may be proper to mention, under this second preliminary point, a splendid speculation concerning the final state of the wicked, which has arisen out of some of the principles formerly delineated.

If, according to the Socinian system, the essential goodness of God incline him at all times to pardon transgression, we cannot suppose that he will prolong the existence of creatures naturally mortal, only that he may continue, through all eternity, to punish the sins committed during a few years upon earth: and if, according to the middle system, it is the character of the Gospel to restore forfeited life to the whole human race, it seems to follow, that the restored life cannot, in any case, be merely the capacity of enduring everlasting punishment, since, upon that supposition, the restoration of life, which is stated as a universal blessing, would to many be the greatest curse. These two systems, therefore, tend to produce the belief that those who have been wicked shall, after a certain time, be either annihilated or reformed.

The annihilation of soul and body, according to the So-

cinian system, is the natural mortality of man left to operate upon those who reject the offer of eternal life made in the Gospel; according to the middle system, it is the curse which Adam conveyed to his posterity, which the Gospel offers to remove from all, and which it effectually removes from those who have lived virtuously. As the sins of those who reject this offer deserve a punishment more severe than any that is inflicted in this life, they are raised at the last day that they may receive according to their deeds; but after they have endured a sufficient measure of punishment, they are left to relapse into that death, that extinction of being, in which the whole human race would have remained, had it not been for the grace of the Gospel. If the souls and bodies of all that have been wicked are at length annihilated, the final effect of the sins committed in this life will be a loss of existence in the universe, but not a perpetuity of misery; for, after a certain time, no beings of the human race shall exist but those who, in consequence of the virtues which they had displayed upon earth, are made happy for ever.

Others conceive that the wicked shall not be annihilated, but, after a certain time, reformed. Considering the soul of man as naturally immortal, and thinking it unworthy of the ruler of the universe to adopt, as a method of conducting his government, the destruction of a number of beings whom he had made to live for ever, they endeavour to reconcile the future misery of the wicked with their system concerning the nature of the Gospel remedy, by supposing that the punishments which are endured after death, being intended, like many of the calamities of this life, to correct the vices of those upon whom they are inflicted, shall terminate in their reformation. If it be admitted that goodness constitutes the whole moral character of the Deity, that, as with respect to his understanding he is light, so with respect to his will he is love, and nothing but love, it will follow, that what are commonly called his other attributes are only modifications of goodness, the necessary result of this primary attribute; that justice, which is generally stated as opposite to goodness, is nothing else but a constant desire of giving to his reasonable creatures what their moral state requires. Those who are docile and tractable, he leads by

gentle methods to the perfection of their nature; those whose passions are impetuous, and whose hearts are hard, he subdues by afflictions, that they may become partakers of his holiness. The discipline of this life, which often appears harsh, is only the expression of his fatherly love administering salutary chastisement; and as this discipline does not produce its effect with regard to all during the short time that is allotted to them upon earth, he continues the chastisement in a future state, where it is administered with a severity suited to the depravity of the sufferer; and is prolonged till sin be completely destroyed. If all the wicked are at length thus reformed after death, the final effect of the trangressions that have been committed upon earth, is neither the destruction nor the everlasting misery of any human being: for the misery endured after death, which is described in Scripture by many lively images, gradually works the correction of that moral evil from which it sprung; and when it has accomplished this end, every sinner will be rescued from the consequences of his transgression, and all the children of Adam placed in a state of unalterable virtue and happiness.

A view of the termination of future punishment, which appears to be agreeable to the most enlarged conceptions of the divine goodness that reason can form, is supposed to derive much confirmation from those descriptions of the divine clemency with which the Scriptures abound; from its being said that the mercy of the Lord endureth for ever, that he will not forsake the works of his hands, that he will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth; and from our Lord's employing, Matt. xxv. 46, as the name of the everlasting punishment reserved for the wicked, the word κολασις, which is the *vox signata* in Greek for that kind of punishment which is meant for the correction of him who has behaved ill, that he may behave better in time to come, and which may be called everlasting, if it endures without intermission till he be corrected.

This opinion, concerning the final reformation of the wicked by means of the punishments of a future state, is traced back to Origen, a father of the third century, to whose extensive erudition and indefatigable industry, the Christian world is much indebted, but whose fancy, which

in many respects was not tutored and chastised by sound judgment, produced various mystical interpretations of Scripture, and whose intimate acquaintance with the heathen philosophy was often employed to adulterate the simplicity of the Gospel. The Platonic and Stoic philosophers spoke of a certain period of ages, to which we are accustomed to give the name of *annus magnus*, after the completion of which they conceived that all things would return to the state in which they were at the creation. It is not agreed amongst the learned, whether Origen adopted this idea so completely as to believe that there is a succession of worlds, a resolution of all things into their first principles, and a reproduction of them in continual rotation. But he certainly believed that the punishments of the wicked in a future state would, after some ages, produce an amendment of character, and that in consequence of this amendment, all the spirits who had endured these punishments would in time, some at a nearer, some at a more remote period, join those spirits who had suffered nothing after death.

The authority of Origen gave a degree of currency to this opinion. It is said to have been held by some writers in the dark ages. It was revived about 200 years ago by its conformity to the leading principles of Socinianism; and, not to mention many smaller treatises, it was lately exhibited in a most elegant and pleasing dress, in a French book entitled, "Le Plan de Dieu envers les hommes, par Petit Pierre." This opinion has not been confined to Socinians. Many who hold the doctrine of atonement have discovered a propensity to embrace an opinion, which seems to magnify the effect of the interposition of Christ; at least they are disposed to consider the eternity of hell torments as a problematical point which the Scriptures have not decided; and some benevolent writers have laboured to bring forth an idea, which they call in a Scripture phrase the restitution of all things. It appears to them that so glorious a being as the Son of God must have come into the world, and endured the sufferings which marked his life, for some design more excellent, and more worthy of the Father of all than the redemption of a part of mankind. They suppose, therefore, that his mediation is operating, although they cannot explain how, for the

universal restoration of the human race; that he is the agent employed in extirpating moral evil from the creation of God; that this is the reason of the name given him in the Septuagint translation of a part of the celebrated prophecy of the Messiah, in Isaiah ix. *και καλειται το ονομα αυτου, Μεγαλης βουλης αγγελος*: not as it is rendered in our English Bibles, "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor," but "His name shall be called the messenger of the great design;" that his kingdom shall continue till the great design be accomplished; and that when he has made an end of sin, and reconciled all things in heaven and earth to his Father, he will deliver up the kingdom; and righteousness, peace, and happiness will for ever pervade the whole intelligent creation.

These are delightful prospects; and a heart, which is disposed by its own good affections to take an interest in the prosperity of other beings, is ready to entertain them upon very slender evidence. But it is of much importance for students of divinity to remember that these prospects do not constitute an essential part of theology. They extend far, very far indeed, beyond the limits of our observation or our capacities. They rest upon conjectures, not upon reasoning; upon incidental expressions of Scripture, which admit of other interpretations; upon analogies which, even when they are most pointed and numerous, amount only to probability, which are easily overstrained by a mind elevated with the magnificence of the subject, or warmed with philanthropy, and which, without much caution, lead to fanciful theories, and to conclusions that are found to be false. Whenever we presume to determine what is proper to be done in the government of the universe, we attempt to comprehend a subject which embraces numberless relations that are perfectly unknown to us. Such speculations may be pleasing, and they may be plausible; but they are the speculations of creatures who forget that they "are but of yesterday and know nothing," and who, stepping beyond the humble and sober province that is allotted to man, presume to instruct the Ancient of days. It is the character of sound theology, not to subject the administration of God to our conjectures and theories; but, in the firm persuasion that he is able to do all his pleasure, and that he

will do that which is right, to inquire with reverence and with diligence what he has done, and what he has said he will do, and to make the information which Scripture affords upon these points, the measure of our hopes, and the rule of our conduct.

Although, therefore, I judge it proper, in opening that great division of the subjects of theological controversy upon which we now enter, to mention speculations that have been indulged concerning the final condition of those who reject the salvation of the Gospel, it is not to be supposed that these speculations constitute the points which divide the opinions of the Christian world in regard to the extent of the remedy. They are the speculations of individual writers, or they arise incidentally from general systems. But they are not the characteristical tenets of any great body of Christians; and whatever similarity there may appear in the name, the questions concerning universal and particular redemption have a very different object.

With these questions I begin the statement of that system of doctrine in regard to the extent of the remedy, which is called Calvinistic, by holding which, the Church of Scotland is distinguished from the Arminians, from the Lutheran churches, and from a very great part of the members of the Church of England.

Leland's View of the Deistical Writers.
Shaw's Philosophy of Judaism.
Clarke's Evidences and Sermons.
Law's Theory of Religion.
Jortin's Discourses.
Warburton's Divine Legation of Moses.
Hurd's Sermons.

CHAP. VI.

PARTICULAR REDEMPTION.

By the Calvinistic tenets is meant that system of doctrine with regard to the extent of the remedy, which distinguishes those who embrace all the opinions of Calvin, from those Christians who agree with him only as to the divinity of Christ, and the atonement. I shall not attempt to open the whole system at once; but I shall go step by step through the points of difference between it and other systems, in the order which appears to me the most natural. In this way we shall not reach all the parts of the Calvinistic system, till we have gone through the third great division of the subjects of theological controversy, I mean the application of the remedy, and we shall then be able, by a short retrospective view of the ground over which we have travelled, to form a precise connected idea of the whole. According to this manner of exhibiting the Calvinistic system, I begin with stating the question concerning universal and particular redemption; in other words, whether Christ died for all men, or only for those who shall finally be saved by him.

The two sides of this question do not imply any difference of opinion with regard to the sufficiency of the death of Christ, or with regard to the number and character of those who shall eventually be saved. They who hold the one and the other side of the question agree, that although the sufferings of Christ have a value sufficient to atone for the sins of all the children of Adam, from the beginning to the end of time, yet those only shall be saved by this atonement who repent and believe in him. But they differ

as to the destination of the death of Christ,—whether in the purpose of the Father and the will of the Son it respected all mankind, or only those persons to whom the benefit of it is at length to be applied.

The doctrine of universal redemption is mentioned as one of the distinguishing tenets of the Pelagians. It forms the subject of one of the five points which comprehend the Arminian system. It is held by all the Lutheran churches. It seems to be taught in one of the articles of the church of England, and several parts of the Liturgy; and it is avowed by the great body of English divines as the doctrine of Scripture and of their church. This doctrine will be understood from the second of the five Arminian points, which is thus expressed: "Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, died for all men, and for every individual, so as to obtain for all, by his death, reconciliation and remission of sins; upon this condition, however, that none in reality enjoys the benefit of this remission but the man who believes." Dr. Whitby, in his discourse on the five points, thus explains the doctrine: "When we say Christ died for all, we do not mean that he hath purchased actual pardon or reconciliation or life for all; this being in effect to say that he procured an actual remission of sins to unbelievers, and actually reconciled God to the impenitent and disobedient, which is impossible. He only, by his death, hath put all men in a capacity of being justified and pardoned, and so of being reconciled to, and having peace with God, upon their turning to God, and having faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; the death of Christ having rendered it consistent with the justice and wisdom of God, with the honour of his Majesty, and with the ends of government, to pardon the penitent believer."

According to this doctrine, the death of Christ is an universal remedy for that condition in which the posterity of Adam are involved by sin,—a remedy equally intended for the benefit of all. It removes the obstacles which the justice of God opposed to their deliverance. It puts all into a condition in which they may be saved, and it leaves their actual salvation to depend upon their faith. The remedy may in this way be much more extensive than the application of it. But even although the offer of pardon were rejected by all, it would not follow that the atone-

ment made by the death of Christ was unnecessary, for the offer could not have been given without it; and whatever reception the Gospel may meet with, the love of God is equally conspicuous in having provided a method by which he may enter into a new covenant with all who had sinned.

This doctrine appears to represent the Father of all in a light most suitable to that character, as regarding his children with an equal eye, providing, without respect of persons, a remedy for their disease, and extending his compassion as far as their misery reaches. And it appears to represent the satisfaction which Christ offered to Divine justice, as opening a way for the love of God to the whole human race being made manifest by the most enlarged exercise of mercy. These views are supported by the general strain of Scripture, and by many very significant expressions which occur in the New Testament.* It is said that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world; that he died for all; that he gave himself a ransom for all; that he tasted death for every man.† The extent of the grace of God in our justification seems to be compared with the extent of the effects of Adam's sin in our condemnation.‡ Large societies of persons professing Christianity, all of whom we cannot suppose to be of the number of those who shall be finally saved, are addressed in the Epistles as those for whom Christ gave himself; and there are expressions in some of the Epistles which seem to intimate that he died even for those who perish.§ False teachers, who brought in damnable heresies, are said, 2 Pet. ii. 1. to have been bought by the Lord. All to whom the Gospel is revealed are commanded to believe in Christ for the remission of sins, which seems to imply that he has made atonement for their sins; and to give thanks for Christ, which seems to imply that he is an universal Saviour. Jesus marvelled at the unbelief of those among whom he lived; he upbraided them because they repented not; he besought men to come to him; and he bewailed the folly of the Jews, saying, as he wept over their city, "if thou hadst

* John i. 29; iii. 16. 1 Tim. ii. 4; iv. 10. 2 Pet. iii. 9.
† John vi. 51. 1 Tim. ii. 6. Heb. ii. 9. 1 John ii. 2.
‡ Rom. v. 18. § 1 Cor. viii. 11. Rom. xiv. 15.

known in this thy day the things which belong to thy peace."* Even the Almighty, both in the Old and in the New Testament, condescends to use entreaties and expostulations, as well as commands. "What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it? O that my people had hearkened unto me!"† "God hath given unto us," says the Apostle, "the ministry of reconciliation, to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."‡ The establishment of a Gospel ministry continues this ambassadorship in every Christian country, and may be regarded as a standing witness of the universality of redemption, because these expostulations, which the servants of Christ are commissioned to use in the name of God, appear to be without meaning, unless we suppose that God hath done every thing on his part, and that it rests only with us to embrace the remedy which is offered.

In giving this general view of the arguments by which the advocates for the doctrine of universal redemption support their opinion, I have separated them as much as possible from those more intricate questions of theology which will meet us as we advance. But even from the simple manner in which I have stated them, it is plain that they admit of much amplification. Some of them are susceptible of rhetorical embellishment; others lead into a large field of Scripture criticism; and there are others, the force of which cannot be estimated till after a review of the whole Calvinistic system. These arguments are spread out at length, not only by professed Arminian writers, but by many English divines, particularly in Barrow's Sermons upon the doctrine of universal redemption, and in the second of Whitby's discourses upon the five points, entitled the Extent of Christ's Redemption. These two writers have given a collection of all the texts of Scripture which appear to establish this doctrine, and a very favourable specimen of the mode of reasoning by which it is commonly supported.

* Mark vi. 6. Matth. xi. 20, 28. Luke xix. 41, 42.
† Isaiah v. 4. Psalm lxxxi. 13. ‡ 2 Cor. v. 18, 19, 20.

Any person who examines with candour the arguments now stated, will acknowledge that they have considerable weight. I mention this, because I do not know any lesson more becoming students of divinity, than this—not to despise the reasonings of those with whose opinions they do not entirely agree. The longer they study theological controversy with that sobriety and fairness of mind which is essential to the character of every inquirer after truth, they will perceive the more clearly how little acquainted with the weakness of the human understanding, and with the intricacy of many of the points that have divided the Christian world, are those who state their opinions in the petulant dogmatical manner often assumed by smatterers in knowledge, as if there were not a shadow of reason but upon their own side. In the question which we are now treating, it requires a thorough acquaintance with the Calvinistic system, and much compass of thought, to apprehend the full force of the answers that may be given to the arguments for universal redemption; and I warn you rather to wait for the conviction which will arise from a view of all the parts of that system, than to expect that arguments equally plausible, in favour of particular redemption, are immediately to be stated. The following observations, however, will, upon reflection, open the sources of these arguments.

1. Those, who hold that the destination and intention of the death of Christ respected only such as shall finally be saved by him, appear to be warranted by many expressions which occur in the New Testament; such as the following: John x. 11, 15, "I lay down my life for the sheep;" that is, as the expression is explained in the context, for those who "hear and follow me;" John xi. 52; xv. 12, 13, 14; Eph. v. 25.

2. As the persons, to whom the intention of Christ's death appears in such expressions to be restrained, are found in all places of the world, there is a propriety and significancy in the general phrases employed elsewhere to denote them: and when some of the texts commonly urged in proof of universal redemption are examined particularly, there will be discovered, in the context, circumstances which indicate that the general expressions there used were intended to mark the indiscriminate extension

of the blessings of the Gospel to men of all nations. Thus, because the benefit of the Jewish sacrifices was confined to that nation, John the Baptist, when he saw Jesus coming to him, marked him out to the people as "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world;"* that is, of all those in every place who are forgiven.—So John, in his first epistle, speaking as a Jew, says of Jesus, "he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only," that is, not for the sins of us Jews only, "but also for the sins of the whole world."†—So the apostle Paul says of Jesus, he "gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."‡ But if we attend to the scope of the discourse, of which these words make a part, which is an exhortation to pray for all men, and a command to all men in every place to pray, it will be perceived that the apostle's argument does not necessarily require any farther meaning to be affixed to these words than this,—that Christ gave himself a ransom not merely for that peculiar people, who are sometimes called in the Old Testament the "ransomed of the Lord," but for all in every place who shall obtain redemption.

3. Although deliverance from the evils of sin, the great blessing purchased by the death of Christ, is peculiar to those who shall finally be saved by him, yet there are blessings which the publication of the Gospel has imparted to others; and there is strict propriety in saying that the love of God to mankind which appears in creation and providence, and by which God is good to all, has produced the manifestation and the death of Christ, although the benefits intended by that event for those who shall finally be saved are very much superior to the benefits, which it may be the instrument of conveying to the whole human race. To a great part of the world the Gospel has communicated the most valuable knowledge: it has delivered many nations from gross superstition and idolatry; it has explained the duties of men more clearly than any other method of instruction: it furnishes restraints upon vice and incentives to virtuous exertion, that are unknown to civil legislation; and by all these methods it contributes to the prosperity of society, and to the welfare of the in-

* John i. 29. † 1 John ii. 2. ‡ 1 Tim. ii. 6.

dividual. These common benefits of Christianity are [redacted] ficient to explain many expressions in the epistles [redacted] dressed to Christian societies, without our being obli[redacted] to suppose that all the members of these societies were [redacted] the end to inherit eternal life. In respect of these co[redacted] mon benefits, we understand the following passages, H[redacted] vi. 4, Heb. x. 29, and 2 Peter ii. 1. For all who had [redacted] opportunity of hearing the Gospel, had tasted the go[redacted] word of God, and the powers of the world to come; they were sanctified through the blood of the covenant; and, in the language of Peter in his first epistle, they were "redeemed with the blood of Christ, from their vain conversation which they had received by tradition from their fathers." Amongst the number thus redeemed, were the false teachers of whom he speaks in his second epistle. They had relinquished the errors in which they were educated: they had professed themselves the servants of Jesus, and were bound to him as their Lord; but by bringing in damnable heresies, they denied the Lord that bought them. The apostle Paul seems to refer to this distinction between the common benefits which all professing Christians derive from the death of Christ, and the complete salvation of those who are called his sheep and his friends, when he says, 1 Tim. iv. 10, "God is the Saviour of all men;" not only in respect of his preserving providence, but in respect of that χαρις σωτηριος which, through the kindness and love of God our Saviour, hath appeared to all men;—"specially of them that believe," that is, he is in a much more eminent sense the Saviour of them that believe, than of other men.

4. It should be considered, that although the advocates for universal redemption do not allow that there is any weight in the two preceding observations, yet they are obliged, upon their own principles, to admit that many of those expressions, from which they infer that Christ died intentionally for all men, require a limitation. For if faith in Christ be the condition upon which men become partakers of the propitiation which he offered to God, it seems to follow that all who have not the means of attaining this faith are excluded from the benefit of the propitiation. But it is certain that the ancient heathen world did not know the nature of that dispensation, the promise

which was confined to the Jews; and it is manifest that a great part of the world at this day have never heard of the Gospel. Were the offer of pardon that is contained in the Gospel actually made to all the children of Adam, there would be an appearance of truth in saying that all men were thereby put into a condition in which they might be saved, and that it depended upon themselves whether or not they embraced the offer. But if the efficacy of the remedy is inseparably connected with its being accepted, it cannot be, in the intention of the Almighty, an universal remedy, since he has withheld the means of accepting it from many of those for whom it is said to have been provided. The words of the apostle, then, "God will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth," must receive from the event an interpretation different from that which is the most obvious; and all the other texts urged in favour of universal redemption are in like manner limited by the imperfect publication of the Gospel. The Arminians themselves acknowledge that there is a secret which they cannot penetrate,—a deep and unsearchable counsel, in leaving so many nations without the possibility of attaining to the truth; and all their attempts to reconcile an intention in God to save the inhabitants of these nations, with the grossness of the superstition in which they are involved, and the insuperable obstacles which education, example, habit, and situation oppose to their believing in Christ, are unsatisfying and defective; because they either proceed upon the principles of the Socinian doctrine, that men may everywhere be saved by acting up to the light of nature, or they approach to some parts of the Calvinistic system, respecting the effectual and irresistible operation of the grace of God upon the soul; which the Arminians profess to renounce.

5. To those who hold the doctrine of particular redemption it appears that the event, in those countries where the Gospel has been published, clearly indicates that there was not in the Almighty an intention of saving all men by the death of Christ. For it is plain that many of those who have every opportunity of believing in Christ, either reject his religion, or show by their conduct that they do

not possess that faith which entitles them to partake in the benefits of his death. With regard to them, therefore, his death is in vain; and if God intended that they should be saved, his intention fails of its effect. But it seems when we hold such a language, that we speak in a manner unbecoming our circumstances, and inconsistent with those views of the Almighty which are suggested by reason, and are clearly taught in Scripture. "Known to God are all his works from the beginning." The whole scheme of the universe, which derived its existence from his pleasure, was present to the Creator at the instant when he said, "Let there be light." The actions of his creatures, which form a most important part of that scheme, were to him the object of a foreknowledge infinitely more clear and certain than our knowledge of that which is before our eyes. The perfections of his nature exclude the possibility of any change in the divine mind; and those events which to us appear the most unexpected and irregular, fulfil "the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of his will."

If these views of the Almighty are just, and if our minds are able to follow out the consequences which necessarily result from them, we cannot conceive him susceptible of that disappointment, regret, and alteration of measures which we often experience by the failure of our schemes; but we must admit that the original intention of the Creator and Ruler of the universe always coincides with the event which takes place under his administration. Since many, therefore, to whom the Gospel is published, appear, as far as we can judge from our own observation, and from the complaints of Scripture, to remain under the wrath of God, we do not seem to draw an unwarrantable conclusion, when we infer from the event, that it was not a part of the intention of the Almighty to deliver them from wrath by the death of his Son. In the same manner as many who have the means of improvement do not attain knowledge or skill, and some who have talents and opportunities for rising to wealth and honour pass their days in obscurity and indigence; so many to whom the offer of eternal life is made through Jesus Christ put it far from them. In both cases the blessings of God are

abused, and men do not reap the temporal and spiritual benefits, which, had it not been for their own fault, they might have reaped; but in neither case is the intention of God disappointed. For he foresaw the use which they would make of his blessings, and all the consequences of their conduct entered into the plan of his government.

These views of the Almighty seem to correct that desire of magnifying the love of God to mankind, which has led many to ascribe to him an intention of saving all men, although he knew that a great part of the human race were not to be saved. They seem to suggest, in place of this defective intention, a destination more worthy of the sovereignty of the Creator,—a destination of saving those who shall in the end be saved; and there are many places of Scripture in which the destination, that we are led in this manner to deduce from the perfection of the divine nature, seems to be intimated. I refer at present only to John vi. where our Lord says repeatedly, that he gave his life for the world, and where he speaks also of those whom the Father hath given him. "The bread of God is he who cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me. This is the Father's will, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." Here are the doctrines of particular and of universal redemption seemingly taught in the same discourse. The expressions of the one kind must be employed to qualify the expressions of the other kind; and it cannot be said that we pervert Scripture, when, adhering to the particular destination of saving those who shall be saved, which reason teaches and Jesus Christ declares, we give the other expressions such an interpretation as renders them consistent with that destination.

This fifth observation has conducted us to the threshold of those intricate questions in theology, which arise out of the different conceptions formed by Christians of the nature and the manner of the divine foreknowledge. To the views entertained of this attribute, we may trace the

different opinions concerning the doctrine of predestination; and therefore from this point I shall begin, under a deep sense of the difficulty of the subject, and of the reverence and humility with which it becomes us to speak of the counsels of the Almighty, to state these opinions.

Barrow's Sermons.
Whitby on the Arminian Points.

CHAP. VII.

OPINIONS CONCERNING PREDESTINATION.

SECTION I.

THE opinion which is to be stated first, because it appears to be the most simple, may be called the Socinian. It is the system of those who attempt to get rid of all the difficulties in which the divine foreknowledge seems to involve the subject, by denying that this attribute belongs to the Almighty to the extent in which it is usually understood. Socinus and his immediate followers admitted that God knows all things which are knowable. But they abridged the objects of divine knowledge, by withdrawing from that number those events whose future existence they considered as uncertain. Their manner of reasoning was this. Every thing that now is has a real existence, which is the subject of knowledge. Every thing that is past had at some former time a real existence, which is also the subject of knowledge. Every thing that is necessarily to happen at some future time may be known by a mind capable of tracing the nature of the connexion, by which it proceeds out of that which now is. Thus all the changes in the material world arise, according to certain general laws, out of its present condition. If any being, therefore, is perfectly acquainted with that condition, and with the operation of those laws, he sees the future in the present; and, in general, every event, the futurition of which is certain, may be the subject of infallible knowledge. But there are events which appeared to Socinus contingent, in this sense of the word, that

they do not arise from any thing preceding, as their cause. They may be, or they may not be; and as he thought that they were not certainly future, he thought also that it was impossible for any being to know certainly beforehand that they were to happen. Amongst this number he ranked the determinations of free agents, all those actions which proceed from the will of man. For as the actions of men follow the choice which they have made, and as he who chose one thing might have chosen another, it appears that there is no previous circumstance necessarily and unavoidably producing this or that action; and from hence Socinus inferred that every thing done by men acting freely is, by its nature, incapable of being the subject of that infallible foreknowledge commonly ascribed to the Almighty.

According to this system, there cannot be any such decree with regard to the salvation of particular persons as is meant by the word predestination. For as the remission of sins is connected in Scripture with faith and repentance, and as the determinations of free agents are supposed to be unknown to God, he must be ignorant whether any persons will attain that character, without which they cannot be saved. The only decree respecting the salvation of men, which Socinus admits to have been made from the beginning, and to be unchangeable, is this general conditional decree, that whosoever repents and believes in Jesus shall have eternal life. This decree is applied to particular persons, when they appear to possess the character which it describes; and by this application, what in its original form was merely the declaration of a condition becomes an absolute peremptory decree, giving eternal life to those who have been faithful unto death. But it is unknown to God what number of such persons there may be, or whether there may be any. Although he has provided means for the recovery of mankind, he is as ignorant of the efficacy or the result of these means as any of the children of men; and all the expressions in Scripture, which we are accustomed to consider as spoken after the manner of men, are understood by Socinus to be the literal descriptions of the state of a being, who waits with anxiety for what men will do, who is grieved at their obstinacy, who repents that he has

done so much for them, and who is liable to meet with total disappointment in the end which he proposed to himself.

If this system appears to remove some of the difficulties which attend other systems, it purchases this advantage by bringing the character of the Deity so far down to a level with human weakness, as to sap the foundations of religion. If God does not foresee the determinations of free agents, he cannot foresee the consequences of their determinations. But if it be considered how very much the state of the moral world depends upon actions that proceed from choice, how far the history of the human race has, from the beginning, been affected by the conduct of creatures who might have acted otherwise, we must be sensible that a being who had not the foreknowledge of that conduct, was, from the beginning, ignorant of by much the greatest part of the transactions that were to take place in the world which he made. The whole train of prosperous and calamitous events that were to befal families and nations was hidden from his eyes. Instead of appearing in the exalted light of the author of a plan by which the affairs of the universe are ordained and arranged for the good of his creatures, he becomes a spectator of unlooked-for occurrences, and his power and wisdom are employed merely in directing events as they arise to his view. His measures are pepetually traversed by evils which he had not foreseen; and while he is occupied from day to day in applying remedies to the disorders which he discovers in different parts of his works, new emergencies show that some other remedy might have been better suited to the case.

From the following expressions of Socinus, it will appear that I have not exaggerated, in painting that degradation of the Deity which necessarily results from abridging his foreknowledge.—"No absurdity," says Socinus, "will follow from supposing that God does not know all things before they happen. For of what use is this knowledge? Is it not enough that God perpetually governs all things, and that nothing can be done against his will; that he is always so present by his wisdom and power, that he can both discern the attempts of men, and hinder them if he pleases; that he can turn all that man can do to his own

glory; and that he may, when he sees proper, appoint before-hand in what manner he shall accommodate his actions to the attempts which man may make?"* The answer to all such questions is this, that it is irreverent, and contrary to the idea of an infinitely perfect Being, to ask, is it not enough for him? that even we are able to form the notion of a much higher degree of perfection than is stated in the questions; that the characters of Creator and Ruler of the universe imply much more; and that the Scriptures uniformly ascribe to God the foreknowledge of the determinations of free agents. The moral conduct of many individuals was foretold before they were born; the behaviour of the people of Israel for a succession of ages, the treatment which they were to receive from the Egyptians, the Babylonians, and other nations; the peculiar kinds of wickedness which were to prevail in the neighbouring kingdoms: the obstinacy of the Jews in rejecting the Messiah; the circumstances of his sufferings; the destruction of Jerusalem, and the corruptions of Christianity,—all these are the subjects of predictions so particular, as to show the most intimate knowledge of the future sentiments and actions of men; for the events which I have enumerated, and many others which occur in reading the prophetical parts of Scripture, are of such a kind that they derive their complexion and character, not from any circumstances in the material world, but from the volitions and determinations of the free agents, who were concerned in bringing them about.

It cannot be said that the predictions of Scripture declare only what is probable. For, besides the apparent improbability of many of the events foretold, and the immense extent of time, and space, and operation, to which the predictions reach, it is obvious that all of them are delivered, not in the language of conjecture, but with the most solemn asseveration, in the name of the God of truth; and it is hard to form any conception more unworthy of the Supreme Being, than that he should conduct his government by declaring, as certain, future events, concerning which he himself, at the time of the declaration, was doubtful.

* Socini Prælect. cap. 8.

Socinus, and some later writers who tread in his steps, sensible that the probability of the events foretold does not afford a satisfying account of the predictions that are found in Scripture, have recourse to a system, with regard to the exertion of the divine foreknowledge in particular cases, of which I shall endeavour to give a fair exposition. They hold that God is able to foresee future events whensoever he pleases, because he can make a particular ordination with respect to them; by which means, events in their own nature contingent become certainly future, and so are the subject of infallible foreknowledge. Thus many blessings foretold in Scripture are good things which God had resolved to send by the actions of men: many evils foretold are punishments which he had resolved to inflict by the same means: many sins foretold are the consequence of his punishing former sin, by withdrawing that grace which would have restrained from future transgression; and the whole series of predictions, that respect the Messiah, results from the ordination of the Almighty concerning the deliverance of mankind. But we must not infer, it is said, from those extraordinary cases in which God chooses to foreordain, and consequently to foresee what is future, that his foreknowledge of future events is universal. The greater part of the determinations of free agents he leaves in their natural state of uncertainty: they may choose one course, or they may choose another; and the course which they are to follow is unknown to him till they have made their choice.

It is admitted by the framers of this new system, that the ordination of God gives events that certainty which renders them capable of being foreknown; and this principle is borrowed from that system of theology which it was their object to overturn. What is peculiar to them is, that they confine this ordination to particular extraordinary cases, and suppose all others exempted from it. But a foreknowledge, exerted at some times and not at others, constitutes a most imperfect kind of government. For the occasion of its being exerted at any particular season can be nothing else but the state of the world at that season: but as this state arises out of that which went before, and as the propriety of the measures taken in reference to it is very much affected by that which is to come after, a

Being, who is supposed ignorant of the great series of events in the universe, is unqualified for making any extraordinary interposition. The framers of the new system were obliged to account for the multitude of predictions respecting the Messiah, by ascribing the whole scheme of his appearance to the ordination of the Almighty. But that scheme, according to the account given of it in Scripture, embraces the introduction, the propagation, and the removal of sin, *i. e.* the whole history of the determinations of the human race, or of their moral conduct from the beginning to the end of time. The ordination of this scheme, therefore, necessarily includes the foreknowledge of the moral conduct of men; and we cannot withdraw that moral conduct from the number of the objects foreknown by God, without supposing that he was unacquainted with the reasons of that scheme which we allow that he ordained.

It appears, then, that the partial admission of the divine foreknowledge, to which necessity has driven the Socinians, does not answer the purpose for which it was resorted to: and that this system carries with it its own confutation, in presuming to restrict the operations of the Supreme Mind. Reason and Scripture concur in teaching that no bounds can be set to the Almighty. Our faculties may be unable to rise to the exalted conception of a Supreme Mind, to whom all things that have been, that now are, and that shall be, are equally present. But the plain declarations of Scripture supersede our speculations. There we read that all his works are known to him from the beginning;* that all things are naked and open in his sight;† that the purposes of his heart endure throughout all generations.‡ The power of foretelling future events, which reason teaches to be essential to his nature, is there claimed by him as his prerogative;§ it is often occasionally exerted in uttering predictions: and as well from the nature of these predictions, as from the manner in which the power is elsewhere spoken of, we are led to conclude that it implies a perception of all the actions of his creatures, which is not subject to mistake, which is incapable

* Acts xv. 18.
† Heb. iv. 13.
‡ Ps. xxxiii. 11.
§ Isa. xlvi. 9, 10.

of receiving any accession, and which extends with equal clearness and facility through every portion of space, and every point of duration.

That abridgment of the objects of the divine foreknowledge, which was first introduced by Socinus, and is peculiar to those who follow him, has not been adopted by all who are called Socinians. Dr. Priestley writes thus, in the first part of his Institutes of Natural and Revealed Religion, which treats of the being and attributes of God. "God having made all things, and exerting his influence over all things, must know all things, and consequently be omniscient. Also, since he not only ordained, but constantly supports all the laws of nature, he must be able to foresee what will be the result of them, at any distance of time; just as a man who makes a clock can tell when it will strike. All future events, therefore, must be as perfectly known to the Divine Mind as those that are present; and as we cannot conceive that he should be liable to forgetfulness, we may conclude that all things, past, present, and to come, are equally known to him; so that his knowledge is infinite." Dr. Priestley takes no notice of the distinction which Socinus made between those events which, arising from necessary causes, are certainly to be, and those which Socinus called contingent, such as the determinations of free agents. The reason is, that Dr. Priestley, being a professed materialist, considered the operations of mind as taking place according to the same laws of nature with the motions of body.

There does not appear to him any more uncertainty in the one than in the other, and therefore both are, in his opinion, equally the objects of divine foreknowledge. If the doctrine of the universal prescience of God unavoidably involves the principles of materialism, it must be renounced by all who hold that the soul is essentially distinct from the body. But if the doctrine can be defended without having recourse to these principles, it is not a sound argument against the truth of the doctrine, whatever discredit it may thereby suffer in the opinion of the ignorant or careless, that a materialist finds it perfectly reconcileable with his system.

SECTION II.

ARMINIUS, who lived in the beginning of the seventeenth century, may be regarded as the founder of the system of opinions generally held by those, who, while they admit the dignity of our Saviour's person, and the doctrine of atonement, do not hold the other doctrines of Calvinism. He and his followers renounced the peculiar tenets of Socinus with regard to the divine prescience. They considered the most contingent future events as known to God: but the power, by which such events are foreknown, appears to them essentially different from the foresight of those events, which arise by a continued chain of causes. It is a power of which they do not pretend to form any distinct conception, which they are content to resolve into the supereminent excellence of the divine nature, and the existence of which they do not attempt to establish by reasoning, but simply deduce from experience. The Scriptures, we have seen, abound with predictions of a series of contingent events, involving numberless determinations of free agents. But if contingent events were certainly foretold, it is manifest that they were certainly foreknown by that Being from whom the prediction proceeded; and if the fact be once established, that God foreknows contingent events, it is admitted by the Arminians, that all the difficulty, which we feel in accounting for the manner of the fact, does not constitute any argument against the truth of the fact. Socinus proceeded upon a maxim which has been repeated after Aristotle in many a system of logic,—*De futuris contingentibus non datur determinata veritas.* Entertaining no doubt of the truth of this maxim, he apprehended that the certain foreknowledge of events destroyed their contingency, and therefore he concluded it to be impossible, or a contradiction in terms, for contingent events to be certainly foreknown. But Arminius and his followers learned to correct the maxim of Aristotle; and it is now universally understood amongst philosophers, that future events, which are in their own nature contingent, may be certain, and consequently may be foreknown. This will be understood from a familiar example. Whe-

ther I am to write a letter to-morrow or not is a matter purely contingent. If no foreign cause interpose to take from me the power which I now possess, I may write, or I may refrain from writing. Both events are equally possible; but one of the events will certainly happen; and of the two propositions, I will write to-morrow, I will not write to-morrow, one, although I do not know which, is at this moment true. The truth which now exists, whether it be perceived by any being or not, will be known at the end of to-morrow to me, and to any person who attends to my employments through the day: and if there is any being who possesses the faculty of knowing the truth beforehand, the determination of my mind is not in the least affected by his knowledge. Although it is certain when the day begins what I am to do, and although the event which is then certain may be known to some being whose understanding is more enlarged than mine, I feel no restraint through the course of the day; but I write or I do not write, I read or I do not read, I go abroad or I remain at home, according to circumstances.

We say, then, that contingency is inconsistent with that necessary determination to one event which excludes the possibility of another: but we say that it is not inconsistent with the certainty, that of two events, either of which might happen, one is to happen; and therefore we hold there is no contradiction in saying that a contingent event may be certainly foreknown. For as Dr. Clarke writes, "Foreknowledge has no influence at all upon the things foreknown; and it has therefore no influence upon them, because things would be just as they were, and no otherwise, though there were no foreknowledge. It does not cause things to be.—The futurity of free actions is exactly the same, and in the nature of the things themselves, of the like certainty in event, whether they can, or whether they could not, be foreknown."*

It is this possibility of foreseeing future contingencies, such as are the determinations of free agents, which distinguishes the Arminian system of predestination from the Socinian. Both systems proceed upon the general declaratory decree, that "whosoever believeth in Jesus Christ

* Sermon on Omniscience of God.

shall be saved," as the first in order, and as becoming peremptory with regard to every individual after he has persevered in faith. But whereas the Socinian scheme supposes the number and the names of the individuals that shall be saved to have been from the beginning unknown to God, and consequently the decrees respecting them to be made at such times as their faith appears to him, the Arminians do not conceive so unworthily of God as to think that any thing new and unexpected can present itself to his mind, and that his decrees are successively made according to emergencies; but they consider all the grounds upon which the conditional decree is at length to become peremptory with regard to individuals, as from the beginning known to God. The amount of their tenets may be thus shortly stated: God, who wills all men to be saved, and who gave his Son to be the Saviour of the world, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, foresaw, before the foundation of the world, the use which men would make of the means of salvation provided for them in Christ. Upon the foresight of the faith and good works of some, he determined, from all eternity, to give them, upon account of Christ, and through Christ, eternal life; and upon the foresight of the unbelief and impenitence of others, he determined, from all eternity, to leave them in sin and subject to condemnation.

According to this system, predestination, or the decree that some persons shall be saved, and others condemned, rests upon the prescience of God, by which, says Arminius, in the declaration of his opinion, God knew, from eternity, what persons, under the administration of the means necessary for producing faith and repentance, were to believe, and what persons were not to believe. By all who hold this system, such a decree is represented as exhibiting at once the goodness and the justice of God: his goodness, in providing a Saviour, and offering the means of salvation; his justice, in rewarding men according to their works, giving eternal life to those who make a proper use of the means, and condemning only those who abuse them. There is, in the language of the Arminians, an antecedent will in God to save all men; that is, a will previous to the consideration of the circumstances of individuals, that all men may be saved: a will which does not

rest in bare desire, what the schoolmen call *velleitas*, but appears carried forth into action in the means which he has provided to accomplish the end. There is in God a consequent will to save only some persons, and to condemn others; that is, a will consequent upon the consideration of the conduct of individuals, and corresponding to that conduct. The difference, say the Arminians, between the antecedent and the consequent will of God, is owing entirely to the sins of men; every thing has been done by him that is necessary for their salvation; and, if they did their part, the antecedent and the consequent will of God would coincide, and all men would be saved.

And thus, by admitting that the actions of moral agents may be free, although they are foreknown, and by building upon the divine foreknowledge of these free actions, the decree respecting the final condition of mankind, the honour of the divine perfections appears to be maintained; the limitation of the extent of the remedy in the Gospel is seen to arise from no other cause but the fault of those to whom it is offered, and the strongest motives are held forth to engage us to "give all diligence in making our election sure." But plausible and unexceptionable as this system at first sight appears, there are difficulties under which it labours, and imperfections that adhere to it, which will open upon us by degrees as we proceed in the exposition of the Calvinistic system of predestination.

SECTION III.

The characteristical feature of the Calvinistic system is, that entire dependence of the creature upon the Creator, which it uniformly asserts, by considering the will of the Supreme Being as the cause of every thing that now exists, or that is to exist at any future time. This principle is fruitful of consequences which, when they are followed out and applied, give to the doctrines of Christianity that peculiar complexion known by the name of Calvinism; and from this principle results that view of the divine pre-

science which is the ground-work of the doctrine of predestination that I am now to delineate.

Of things impossible there can be no knowledge. The same character, by which they must remain for ever in the class of nonentities, so that not even omnipotence can bring them into existence, withdraws them from the number of those subjects of which any mind can form a distinct conception. But all things that are possible may be conceived; and the more perfect any understanding is, the more complete is the representation of things possible in that understanding. To the Supreme Mind, therefore, there are distinctly represented, not only all the single objects which may be brought into existence, but also all the possible combinations of single objects, their relations, and their mutual influences on the systems of which they may compose a part. Out of this representation of possibilities which is implied in the perfection of the divine understanding, the Supreme Being selects those single objects, and those combinations of objects, which he chooses to bring into existence; and every circumstance in the manner of the existence of that which is to be, thus depending entirely on his will, is known to him, because he has decreed that it shall be.

The representation of all things possible in the divine understanding has been called by theologians *Scientia simplicis intelligentiæ:* and the knowledge which God, from eternity, had of all that he was to produce has been called *scientia visionis.* Amongst the objects of the former knowledge are to be ranked all those things, the reality of which would have been the same although no creature had ever been produced, such as the existence of God, his attributes, and all those abstract propositions which are eternally and immutably true. We attain the knowledge of abstract propositions by rising to them from the contemplation of particular objects: but this is a tedious method suited to the imperfection of our natures. The truth of the propositions is totally independent of the existence of the particular objects by which they are suggested to us. That three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles would be true, although no triangle had ever been drawn. By a perfect mind the truth of such general propositions is recognised before the objects are produced;

and the knowledge which the Supreme Being has of the possibilities of things, necessarily involves a knowledge of these abstract propositions; because the very circumstance which renders the existence of many things impossible is, that they cannot exist without a contradiction to some of those abstract propositions which are always true. In defining *scientia visionis*, I called it the knowledge which God, from eternity, had of all that he was to produce. The reason, why the words 'from eternity' were inserted in the definition, requires particular attention upon this subject. Since the infinite perfection of the nature of God excludes the idea of change in his purposes, of increase to his knowledge, or of succession in his perception of objects, it follows, that the choice, out of things possible, of those which he determined to bring into existence, was not made in time, at the successive periods at which his creatures appeared; but that the whole plan of what was to be produced was for ever present to his mind. There was a time when all the objects of the *scientia visionis* were future. At that time their futurition, that is, their being to pass in succession from the state of possibility to the state of existence, was known to God, merely as being the result of his own determination. After the execution of this determination commenced, some of the objects of the *scientia visionis* became past; others became present, and others continued future. But all are equally in the view of the divine mind. There is to him no more fatigue or imperfection in the remembrance of what is past, or the foresight of what is future, than in the perception of what now is. Indeed there is an impropriety in using the words remembrance or foresight, when we speak of the knowledge of God; and it is only the narrowness of our conceptions, and the poverty of our language, which compel us to apply such terms to his clear, unvarying intuition of the whole series of objects which derive their existence from his pleasure.

The two kinds of knowledge which have now been explained, are understood, in the Calvinistic system, to comprehend all that can be known. There are no conceivable objects but those of which it can be affirmed, either that they may be, or that they may not be. Of things which may not be, this only can be distinctly known, that they

are impossible; and a being, who knows all the things that may be, knows also what are the things which may not be; for every thing that does not enter into the complete representation of things possible, which is present to his mind, is known, by that circumstance, to be impossible. *Scientia simplicis intelligentiæ*, then, exhausts the subjects of knowledge, in respect of the possibility or impossibility of their existence; but it does not imply any knowledge of the actual existence of those things which are possible; for from this proposition, a thing may be, this other proposition, it shall be, does by means follow. Hence *scientia simplicis intelligentiæ* was called by the schoolmen *scientia indefinita*, as not determining the existence or the non-existence of any object out of the Deity. But *scientia visionis*, on the other hand, was called *scientia definita*, because the existence of all the objects of this knowledge, whether they be past, present, or future, is determinate; in other words, it is not more certain that what is past has had an existence, and that what is present now exists, than that what God foresees as future shall exist hereafter. If, therefore, *scientia visionis* be joined to *scientia simplicis intelligentiæ*, every thing that can be known is comprehended; in other words, if nothing can exist without the will of the First Cause, and if the First Cause, who knows all things that are possible, knows also what things he wills to produce, then he knows every thing. There is nothing that does not fall under one or other of these kinds of knowledge. We have already seen that all which can be known, of things that may not be, belongs to the *scientia simplicis intelligentiæ;* and of the things that may be, either a thing is possible, but not future, and then it belongs to this kind of knowledge also; or it both may be, and shall be, and then it belongs to the *scientia visionis*. To state the thing still more plainly, all things which may exist are either things which shall be, or things which shall not be: the latter remain amongst things possible, the objects of *scientia simplicis intelligentiæ;* the former pass from the number of things barely possible into the number of the objects of *scientia visionis*.

Those, who consider all the objects of knowledge as comprehended under one or other of the kinds that have been explained, are naturally conducted to that enlarged

conception of the extent of the divine decree, from which the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination unavoidably follows. The divine decree is the determination of the divine will to produce the universe, that is, the whole series of beings and events that were then future. The parts of this series arise in succession; but all were, from eternity, present to the divine mind; and no cause that was at any time to operate, or no effect that was at any time to be produced in the universe, can be excluded from the original decree, without supposing that the decree was at first imperfect, and afterwards received accessions. The determination to produce this world, understanding by that word the whole combination of beings, and causes, and effects, that were to come into existence, arose out of the view of all possible worlds, and proceeded upon reasons to us unsearchable, by which this world that now exists appeared to the divine wisdom the fittest to be produced. I say, the determination to produce this world proceeded upon reasons; because we must suppose that, in forming the decree, a choice was exerted, that the Supreme Being was at liberty to resolve either that he would create, or that he would not create; that he would give his work this form or that form, as he chose; otherwise we withdraw the universe from the direction of a Supreme Intelligence, and subject all things to blind fatality. But if a choice was exerted in forming the decree, the choice must have proceeded upon reasons; for a choice made by a wise being, without any ground of choice, is a contradiction in terms. At the same time it is to be remembered, that as nothing then existed but the Supreme Being, the only reason which could determine him in choosing what he was to produce, was its appearing to him fitter for accomplishing the end which he proposed to himself than any thing else which he might have produced. Hence *scientia visionis* is called by theologians *scientia libera*. To *scientia simplicis intelligentiæ* they gave the epithet *naturalis*, because the knowledge of all things possible arises necessarily from the nature of the Supreme Mind; but to *scientia visionis* they gave the epithet *libera*, because the qualities and extent of its objects are determined, not by any necessity of nature, but by the will of the Deity. Although, in forming the divine decree, there was a choice of this world, proceeding upon

a representation of all possible worlds, it is not to be conceived that there was any interval between the choice and the representation, or any succession in the parts of the choice. In the divine mind, there was an intuitive view of that immense subject, which it is not only impossible for our minds to comprehend at once, but in travelling through the parts of which we are instantly bewildered; and one decree, embracing at once the end and the means, ordained, with perfect wisdom, all that was to be.

The condition of the human race entered into this decree. It is not, perhaps, the most important part of it when we speak of the formation of the universe, but it is a part which, even were it more insignificant than it is, could not be overlooked by the Almighty, whose attention extends to all his works, and which appears, by those dispensations of his providence that have been made known to us, to be interesting in his eyes. A decree respecting the condition of the human race includes the history of every individual: the time of his appearing upon the earth; the manner of his existence while he is an inhabitant of the earth, as it is diversified by the actions which he performs, and by the events, whether prosperous or calamitous, which befall him; and the manner of his existence after he leaves the earth, that is, his future happiness or misery. A decree respecting the condition of the human race also includes the relations of the individuals to one another: it fixes their connexions in society, which have a great influence upon their happiness and their improvement; and it must be conceived as extending to the important events recorded in Scripture, in which the whole species have a concern. Of this kind is the sin of our first parents, the consequence of that sin reaching to all their posterity, the mediation of Jesus Christ appointed by God as a remedy for these consequences, the final salvation, through this Mediator, of one part of the descendants of Adam, and the final condemnation of another part, notwithstanding the remedy. These events arise at long intervals of time, by a gradual preparation of circumstances, and the operation of various means. But by the Creator, to whose mind the end and the means were at once present, these events were beheld in intimate connexion with one another, and in conjunction with many other events

to us unknown; and consequently all of them, however far removed from one another as to the time of their actual existence, were comprehended in that one decree by which he determined to produce the world.

Hence it may be observed how idly they are employed who presume to settle the order of the divine decrees, and how insignificant are the controversies upon this subject, which in the days of our fathers divided those who were agreed as to the general principles of Calvinism. One side were called Supralapsarians, because in their conceptions of the order of the divine decrees respecting the human race, they ascended above the fall, and considered God as regarding men before they were created, and as resolving to manifest his attributes by the whole series of events which he ordained concerning the race, from the creation of Adam till the consummation of all things. The other side were called Sublapsarians, because they rose no higher than the fall, but considered God as regarding men in the wretched situation to which that event had reduced them, as providing means for their recovery, and as conducting some to eternal life by these means, while he left others in misery. The distinction was allowed, even at the time when it engrossed the attention of theologians, not to be essential: but the good sense of modern times has almost effaced the remembrance of it; because it is now understood that we may employ such illustrations and arrangements of the subject as we find most useful to assist our conceptions, and that we may differ from one another in these illustrations and arrangements, without forsaking the general principles which I have been delineating; provided we remember that, although the narrowness of our faculties obliges us to conceive of the divine decree in parts, these parts were in the divine mind without separation and without priority; and that, whether we ascend higher or lower in our statement of that part of the divine decree which we call the doctrine of predestination, that doctrine is intimately connected with a series of events, the beginning and the end of which our minds are incapable of following.

Having thus unfolded that view of the divine foreknowledge upon which the doctrine of predestination rests in the Calvinistic system, I shall next explain some of the

terms commonly used by those who hold this doctrine, that the true meaning of the Calvinists may be fully understood, before we proceed to compare their system with those formerly stated, or to examine the difficulties with which it is attended. For this purpose, I quote the following words of our Confession of Faith, chapter iii.

"3. By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death.

"4. These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished.

"5. Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen in Christ, unto everlasting glory, out of his mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions or causes moving him thereunto; and all to the praise of his glorious grace.

"6. As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath he, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, foreordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ, by his Spirit working in due season; are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power through faith unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.

"7. The rest of mankind, God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonour and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice."

I quote also the seventeenth article of the Church of England, in the meaning and even in the expression of which there is a striking agreement with part of the preceding paragraphs from the Confession of Faith.

"Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) he hath constantly decreed by his counsel, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour. Wherefore they which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God, be called according to God's purpose, by his Spirit working in due season: they, through grace, obey the calling: they be justified freely: they be made sons of God by adoption: they be made like the image of his only-begotten Son Jesus Christ: they walk religiously in good works; and at length, by God's mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity."

These quotations suggest the following propositions, which may be considered as constituting the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination, and in which there is an explication of most of the terms.

1. God chose out of the whole body of mankind, whom he viewed in his eternal decree as involved in guilt and misery, certain persons who are called the elect, whose names are known to him, and whose number, being unchangeably fixed by his decree, can neither be increased nor diminished; so that the whole extent of the remedy offered in the Gospel is conceived to have been determined beforehand by the divine decree.

2. As all the children of Adam were involved in the same guilt and misery, the persons thus chosen had nothing in themselves to render them more worthy of being elected than any others; and therefore the decree of election is called in the Calvinistic system absolute, by which word is meant, that it arises entirely from the good pleasure of God, because all the circumstances which distinguish the elect from others are the fruit of their election.

3. For the persons thus chosen, God, from the beginning, appointed the means of their being delivered from corruption and guilt; and by these means, effectually applied in due season, he conducts them at length to everlasting life.

4. Jesus Christ was ordained by God to be the Saviour of these persons, and God gave them to him to be redeemed by his blood, to be called by his Spirit, and finally

to be glorified with him. All that Christ did in the character of Mediator, was in consequence of this original appointment of the Father, which has received from many divines the name of the Covenant of Redemption; a phrase, which suggests the idea of a mutual stipulation between Christ and the Father, in which Christ undertook all that work which he executed in his human nature, and which he continues to execute in heaven, in order to save the elect; and the Father promised that the persons for whom Christ died should be saved by his death. According to the tenor of this covenant of redemption, the merits of Christ are not considered as the cause of the decree of election, but as a part of that decree; in other words, God was not moved by the mediation of Christ to choose certain persons out of the great body of mankind to be saved; but having chosen them, he conveys all the means of salvation through the channel of this mediation.

5. From the election of certain persons, it necessarily follows that all the rest of the race of Adam are left in guilt and misery. The exercise of the divine sovereignty, in regard to those who are not elected, is called Reprobation; and the condition of all having been originally the same, reprobation is called absolute in the same sense with election. In reprobation, there are two acts, which the Calvinists are careful to distinguish. The one is called Preterition, the passing by those who are not elected, and withholding from them those means of grace which are provided for the elect. The other is called Condemnation, the act of condemning those who have been passed by, for the sins which they commit. In the former act, God exercises his good pleasure, dispensing his benefits as he will: in the latter act, he appears as a Judge, inflicting upon men that sentence which their sins deserve. If he had bestowed upon them the same assistance which he prepared for others, they would have been preserved from that sentence: but as their sins proceeded from their own corruption, they are thereby rendered worthy of punishment; and the justice of the Supreme Ruler is manifested in condemning them, as his mercy is manifested in saving the elect.

SECTION IV.

I shall in this section advert to the points of difference in the three systems which have been mentioned, and to the difficulties in which the peculiarities of the two systems, that admit of being compared, are supposed to involve those by whom they are defended.

The Socinian and Calvinistic systems are so diametrically opposite, that they do not admit of being compared. For the Socinian, withdrawing future contingent events from the foreknowledge of the Supreme Being, either proceeds upon the principles of materialism, according to which the actions of men are events of the same order, arising unavoidably by the same laws of nature, with the phenomena of the heavens and the earth; or it excludes the possibility of an eternal decree respecting the future condition of men. The first of these alternatives is adopted by Dr. Priestley: the second was adopted by Socinus and his followers. But neither the one nor the other presents what can appear, to those who hold the received principles of natural religion, a system of predestination. Accordingly Socinus says,* that all those places of Scripture, which treat of the divine decree of saving certain men, are to be so explained, *Ut non certi quidam homines nominatim intelligantur, sed genus quoddam hominum.* And one of his followers, speaking in the name of the Socinians, says, that they reject, as hurtful to piety and contrary to Scripture, both the predestination and reprobation of individuals, and also the foreknowledge that some are to make a right use of their liberty, and others to abuse it; and that they assert nothing more than this, that God has predestinated to eternal life all whosoever shall, to the utmost of their power, continue to the end in obedience to his precepts, and that he has reprobated all whosoever shall not obey. *Itaque electio et reprobatio in genere prorsus est certa et immutabilis, in individuo autem mutabilis est.*†

* Socin. Prælect. cap. 13. † Stapfer. iii. 415.

The Arminian system agrees with the Calvinistic in admitting that contingent events, such as the determinations and actions of men, are foreseen by God; and this fundamental principle, without which there can be no predestination, being common to both, it is possible to compare the manner of its being applied in the two systems. Both agree in admitting that there is a peremptory decree by which the Supreme Being, from all eternity, unalterably fixed the everlasting condition of man; but the precise difference between them is this. The Arminians hold that God made this peremptory decree upon the foresight of the faith and good works of some, of the infidelity and impenitence of others; *i. e.* God, foreseeing from all eternity that some would repent and believe, elected them to everlasting life; and foreseeing that others would continue in sin and unbelief, left them to perish. The Calvinists, on the other hand, say, that the faith and good works of the elect are the consequences of their election, and are foreseen by God, because he determined to produce them; that, being the fruits of his determination, they cannot be regarded as the cause of it; and therefore that the election of some, and the reprobation of others, are to be resolved into the good pleasure of God, acting indeed upon the wisest reasons, but not originally moved by the foresight of any circumstance in the former rendering them more worthy of being elected than the latter.

The first thing to be attended to, in comparing these two systems, is the manner of that foresight upon which the Arminian system rests, and from which result all the points of difference between it and the Calvinistic. It is a foresight of the faith and good works of some, in consequence of which they are elected; of the infidelity and impenitence of others, in consequence of which they are reprobated. But this is a foresight which the Arminians do not class either under *scientia simplicis intelligentiæ*, or under *scientia visionis*:—not under the first, which is conversant about things possible, or those abstract relations which are independent of actual existence; whereas this foresight is conversant about objects which are certainly to exist, and whose future existence, as foreseen by God, has power to produce a decree:—not under the

second, which is the knowledge of all things that God has determined to produce; whereas this foresight is conceived to be antecedent to the determination of God, being the cause of his decree respecting the condition of those persons whose conduct is foreseen.

To this kind of foresight, thus distinguished from *scientia simplicis intelligentiæ*, and from *scientia visionis*, they gave the name of *scientia media*, considering it as in the middle between the two. The term was first invented by Molina, a Spanish Jesuit, and a professor of divinity in Portugal. It was the leading principle of a book which he published in 1588, entitled, "Liberi arbitrii concordia cum gratiæ donis, divinâ præscientiâ, providentiâ, predestinatione, et reprobatione;" and it has been adopted by all who hold the system of Arminius. *Scientia media* is the knowledge neither of events that are barely possible, nor of events that are absolutely decreed by God, but of events that are to happen upon certain conditions. When it is applied to the doctrine of predestination, there arises out of it the following system. God from eternity took into his view the natural dispositions of men, the circumstances in which they were to be placed, and the objects which were to be presented to them. From this view, he foresaw the conduct which they were to pursue, and he made their conduct, thus foreseen, the measure according to which he determined to administer the means of grace, and to fix their everlasting happiness or misery. To state the matter more shortly: God foresees what the conduct of men will be in certain situations; upon this foresight he determines their situations; and thus by *scientia media* the free agency of man is reconciled with that prescience, which is implied in the conception of a perfect Mind, who rules the universe.

The Calvinists do not admit that the kind of knowledge, called by this new name, is really different from the two species formerly stated, under which it appears to them that all the objects which can be known are comprehended: and the reasoning which they employ is to this purpose. If it is meant by *scientia media* that God knows every supposable case; that all the combinations which can arise in every situation were present to his mind; and that he is as well acquainted with what might have hap-

pened in any given circumstances as with what will happen: this is *scientia simplicis intelligentiæ*. If by *scientia media*, or, as it is sometimes called, conditionate foreknowledge, be meant that God sees what is to be, not singly, but as depending upon something going before it, this is *scientia visionis*. For nothing stands alone and unrelated in the universe: every event arises out of something antecedent, and is fruitful of consequences. What is called hypothetical necessity, by which no more is meant than this, if one thing is, another shall be, pervades the whole system of creation, and is the very thing which constitutes a system. Events, therefore, are not to be considered as the less ordained by God, because they are dependent upon conditions, since the conditions are of his appointment, and the manner in which the event depends upon the conditions is known to him; so that if the conduct of men be considered as arising out of their circumstances, their temper, and the objects presented to them, it is as much a branch of the *scientia visionis* as the circumstances, the temper, and the objects out of which it arises. But if by *scientia media* we mean not merely the knowledge of all that is possible, not merely the knowledge of all future events in connexion with all present circumstances, but the knowledge of an event that is to be, although it did not enter into the decree of God, it follows, from the principles stated in the preceding section, that there can be no such knowledge. 1. For every future event derives its futurition from the decree of God. To say, therefore, that God foresees an event before he has decreed that it shall be, is to say that he views as future, an event which is merely possible; in other words, that he views an event not as it is. 2. But could we suppose that some events were future, which God had not decreed, his knowledge of these events would be reduced to that kind of conjecture which we form with regard to what shall be, from attending to all the previous circumstances out of which it may be conceived to arise, instead of being that clear, infallible, intuitive prescience of the whole series of causes and effects, which seems essential to the perfection of the divine understanding. 3. And still farther, supposing that, in some inconceivable manner, future events, not decreed by him, were as certainly fore-

known as those which he had decreed, here would be a part of the universe withdrawn from the government of the Supreme Ruler; something that is to come into existence independently of him, the futurition of which, being antecedent to his will, becomes the rule of his determination.

Upon these principles the Calvinists, maintaining the sovereignty of the Deity, reject the third sense of *scientia media*, which is the only sense that is of any use in the Arminian system. They conceive it impossible that any thing, which is to be in the creation, can be the foundation of the divine decree concerning the creature, because every circumstance respecting the existence of the creature is dependent upon the divine will; and they adhere to their own division of the divine knowledge as complete, because the things which may be, and the things which God hath willed to be, comprehend all the objects that can be known.

There are several passages of Scripture which the Arminians adduce in proof of *scientia media*. Of this kind is the following. 1 Sam. xxiii. 10—13. "David said, O Lord God of Israel, thy servant hath certainly heard that Saul seeketh to come to Keilah, to destroy the city for my sake. Will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hands? Will Saul come down, as thy servant hath heard? And the Lord said, He will come down: they will deliver thee up. Then David arose and departed out of Keilah: and it was told Saul that David was escaped from Keilah, and he forebore to go forth." Saul's coming down, and the people's delivering up David, depended upon the condition of David's remaining in the city. As the condition did not take place, the event did not happen: and therefore here, it is said, is an instance of an event not decreed by God, for then it must have happened, yet foretold by him; in other words, here, it is said, is an instance of *scientia media*, the foreknowledge of an event depending upon a condition. But the Calvinists consider this as an instance of *scientia simplicis intelligentiæ*. Amidst the possible combinations of objects which are present to the divine mind, this was one, that if David remained in Keilah, Saul would come down, and the people of the city would deliver him up. The connexion between his re-

maining, Saul's coming down, and the conduct of the people, was what God saw; and at the request of David he declared that connexion. But we must entertain as low an opinion of the divine foreknowledge as the Socinians do, if we suppose that he foresaw the actual existence of any of the events thus connected. To the *scientia simplicis intelligentiæ* there appeared a chain, of which David's remaining in Keilah was one link: to the *scientia visionis* there appeared another chain, of which it was not a link. God knew what would have happened in the one case; he knew what was to happen in the other: but it is a sophism to say that he foresaw what would have happened, when he knew it was not to happen; and this sophism is at the bottom of all the reasonings adduced to prove that there is in God the certain foreknowledge of any events but those which he has decreed to be.

In the same manner the Calvinists explain that expression of our Lord, Mat. xi. 21, which appears to be a still clearer instance of *scientia media*. "Woe unto thee, Chorazin, woe unto thee, Bethsaida; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes." Here is a declaration, consequently a knowledge of the event which would have happened, had the constitution of the universe admitted of the works of our Lord being done in Tyre and Sidon. This event was possible, before the Creator adopted that constitution of the universe which now is: it would have taken place had a particular constitution been adopted; but its existence being excluded by the decree which, adopting the present constitution, includes the objects about which *scientia visionis* is conversant, it remains amongst the objects of *scientia simplicis intelligentiæ*. So all the promises of happiness which men shall realize if they prove obedient, all the expressions of regret at their missing the happiness which they might have attained if they had been obedient, and all the threatenings of misery which they shall incur if they disobey,—all conditional propositions of this kind, with which the Scriptures abound, are to be considered not as intimations of the knowledge which God has of the futurition of any of these events, but merely as enunciations of one branch of that hypothetical necessity which

pervades the system of the universe—the branch by which happiness is connected with virtue, and misery with vice.

Such is the different manner in which the Arminians and the Calvinists conceive of the foreknowledge of God. The Arminians, admitting that all events, of whatever kind, are foreknown by the Supreme Being, but desirous to exempt the actions of men from the influence of his decree, have adopted the term *scientia media*, in order to express a species of knowledge in the divine mind different from *scientia simplicis intelligentiæ*, and from *scientia visionis*. But to the Calvinists, this new term, invented by Molina, appears to be an attempt to establish a distinction where there is not a difference: for according to them, every thing that is to exist is decreed by God; it derives its futurition from his decree, and it is foreseen because it is decreed.

This difference in the manner of conceiving of the divine foreknowledge is the foundation of the difference between the Arminian and the Calvinistic systems, all the distinguishing features of which are instantly perceived, when the different conceptions of the divine foreknowledge, that have been explained, are applied to the great subject about which the systems are conversant. The plan of the Arminian system is this. God, having decreed to give his Son to be the Saviour of all men, having determined to save by Jesus Christ them that repent and believe, and having fixed a certain administration of the means of grace sufficient to bring all men to salvation, foresaw what persons would, under this administration, repent and believe, and them he elected to everlasting life. The plan of the Calvinistic system is this. God having, from all eternity, chosen a certain number of persons, did, in time, give his Son to be their Saviour: he bestows upon them, through him, that grace which effectually determines them to repent and believe, and so effectually conducts them, by faith and good works, to everlasting life. In the Arminian system, the faith and good works of some persons are viewed as independent of the decree by which they are elected. In the Calvinistic system, they are considered as the fruit of election; and they were, from eternity, known to God, because they were, in time, to be produced by the execution of his decree. In the Arminian

system, it is conceived that, although there are many who do not repent and believe, yet means sufficient to bring men to salvation are administered to all; from which it follows, that, antecedently to the decree of election, these elected persons must have been considered as distinguished from others, by some predisposition in respect to faith and good works; so that the doctrine of original sin can be admitted into this system only under such limitations as render it consistent with such predisposition. In the Calvinistic system, predestination being an appointment to the means as well as to the end, and all the conditions of salvation being given with Christ, by the decree of election, to those who are elected, every conception of any original superiority, or any ground of boasting, by nature, is excluded; and the doctrine of original sin is admitted to the extent of representing all men as involved in the same guilt and misery, as equally unable to extricate themselves, and as discriminated from one another by the mere good pleasure of God. In the Arminian system, Christ being conceived as given by God to be the Saviour of all the children of Adam, and as having purchased for all men a sufficient administration of the means of grace, what is called *impetratio salutis* may be of much wider extent than what is called *applicatio salutis*. God wills all men to be saved, upon condition that they repent and believe; but the fulfilment of the condition is conceived, in this system, to depend upon man; and, therefore, the purpose which, in the eternal counsel of divine love, extended to all, is attained with regard to many, or to few, according to the use which they make of the means of grace afforded them. In the Calvinistic system, what is called *applicatio salutis* is conceived to be of equal extent with *impetratio salutis*. To all those, whom God from the beginning decreed to save, he affords the means which infallibly conduct them to salvation: it is not in the power of man to increase or diminish their number; and the divine purpose is effectual to the very extent to which it was originally formed.

This view of the points of difference between the Arminian and Calvinistic systems, suggests the principal difficulties that are peculiar to each, which I shall in this place barely mention. The difficulties under which the Arminian system labours are three.

1. It is not easy to reconcile the infinite diversity of situations, and the very unfavourable circumstances in which many nations, and some individuals of all nations are placed, with one fundamental position of the Arminian system, that to all men there are administered means sufficient to bring them to salvation.

2. It is not easy to reconcile those views of the degeneracy of human nature, and those lessons of humility and self-abasement in the sight of God which both Scripture and reason inculcate, with another fundamental position of that system, that the faith and good works of those who are elected, did not flow from their election, but were foreseen by God as the grounds of it.

3. It is not easy to reconcile the immutability and efficacy of the divine counsel, which enter into our conceptions of the First Cause, with a purpose to save all, suspended upon a condition which is not fulfilled with regard to many.

The difficulties attending the Calvinistic system, however much they may have the appearance of being multiplied by a variety of expressions, are reducible to two.

1. It appears to be inconsistent with the nature of man, to destroy his liberty, and to supersede his exertions, that they who are elected should be effectually determined to repent and believe.

2. It appears inconsistent with the goodness and justice of God, that when all were involved in the same guilt and misery, he should ordain the effectual means of being delivered out of that condition only to a part of the human race, leaving the rest infallibly to perish. And if this be a true account of the divine dispensation, it seems to be a necessary consequence, that all the moral evil which is in the world, and all the misery arising from that moral evil, either here or hereafter, are to be ascribed to God.

I have mentioned the difficulties peculiar to the two systems in this place, because they are suggested by the general view already given of the points of difference between them. But, in order to discern the force of the difficulties, and to judge of the attempts that have been made to remove them, it is necessary to attend more particularly to the account that is given, in each system, of the application of the remedy. I shall proceed, therefore,

now to this third subject of discussion, respecting the Gospel remedy; and, from the complete view which we shall thus attain of the characteristical features of the two systems, we shall be qualified to estimate the difficulties that adhere to each, and prepared to weigh the amount of the evidence which each professes to derive from Scripture.

CHAP. VIII.

OPINIONS CONCERNING THE APPLICATION OF THE REMEDY.

As it is unquestionably the doctrine of Scripture, that none partake of the salvation which the Gospel was given to afford, but those who repent and believe, we are entitled to say that the remedy offered in the Gospel is connected with a certain character of mind. The extent of the remedy being thus limited in so far that it reaches only to persons of that character, I employ the phrase, The Application of the Remedy, in order to express the production of that character; and I consider systems as differing from one another in respect of the application of the remedy, when they differ as to the manner in which the character is produced.

From the distinguishing features of the Socinian system, it will be perceived that, as it denies several of those fundamental principles on which the Arminians and Calvinists agree, it cannot be compared with them in respect to the application of the remedy. The Socinians adopt that doctrine which was introduced by Pelagius about the beginning of the fifth century, that the moral powers of human nature are not in the least injured by the sin of our first parents, but that all the children of Adam are as able to yield a perfect obedience to the commands of God as he was at his creation. They admit that men may be led, by the strength of passion, by unfavourable circumstances, and by imitation, into such sins as separate them from the favour of God, and render it difficult

for them to return to the obedience of his laws; but they hold that this difficulty never amounts to a moral impossibility; and that at what time soever a sinner forsakes his transgressions, he is forgiven, not upon account of what Christ did, but from the essential goodness of the divine nature. They acknowledge that the Gospel gives to a sinful world more gracious and more effectual assistance in returning to their duty, than ever was afforded before; but they consider this assistance as arising solely from the clear revelation there given of the nature and the will of God, from the example there proposed, and from the hope of eternal life, that gift of God which is peculiar to this religion. By its doctrines and its promises, it presents to the human mind the strongest motives to obedience. All, therefore, who live in a Christian country, enjoy an outward assistance in the discharge of their duty, of very great value; and those, who receive the Gospel as the word of God, feel the power of it in their hearts. This inward power, the influence of the doctrine of Christ upon the mind, the Socinians understand to be, in many places of the New Testament, the whole import of these expressions, "the Spirit of God," the "Spirit of life," the "Spirit of the Lord." For as they deny that the Spirit is a person distinct from the Father and the Son, they are obliged to consider all the expressions from which the Trinitarians infer the personality of the Spirit, as figures, or circumlocutions; and when it is said, "we walk after the Spirit—the Spirit of life makes us free—where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty—ye are washed and sanctified by the Spirit of our God," they find it easy to evade the argument which these and numberless phrases of the same kind are supposed to contain, by understanding the meaning of the sacred writers to be no more than this, that the influence of the doctrine and promises of the Gospel upon the mind, when they are firmly believed and cordially embraced, produces such effects.

From these fundamental principles of the Socinian system it follows, that the application of the remedy is conceived in that system to be purely the work of man; that, as even without the advantages which the Gospel affords, he may, in every situation, by the mere use of

his natural powers, do what is of itself sufficient to deliver him from the evils of sin, so his improving the assistance communicated by the Christian revelation, in such a manner as to attain the character connected with the enjoyment of its blessings, arises not in any degree from the agency of a superior being upon his mind, but is an exercise of his own power depending wholly upon himself.* It is one of those future contingencies which the Socinians suppose to be withdrawn from the divine foresight; and predestination according to them is nothing more than the purpose of calling both Jews and Gentiles to the knowledge of the truth, and the hope of eternal life by Jesus Christ—a purpose which God from the beginning formed, without knowing whether the execution of this purpose would have the effect of bringing any individual to heaven. Neither the extent nor the application of the remedy entered into his decree; but God did all that he proposed to do by giving the revelation, leaving to men to make use of it as they thought fit, and to receive such reward and such punishment as they shall appear to him to deserve.

This system, which as I said before attempts to get rid of difficulties by degrading the character of the Supreme Being, and excluding some of the first principles of religion, does not fall within a comparative view of the different systems of predestination; and there remain to be considered only two opinions concerning what I call the application of the remedy, which we distinguish by the names of Arminian and Calvinistic. Of each of these opinions I shall give a fair statement; by which I mean, that I shall endeavour to show in what manner the Arminian opinion is separated from Socinian principles by those who hold it, and in what light the Calvinistic opinion is represented by those who appear to understand best the grounds upon which it may be defended; and from this fair statement I shall proceed to canvass the difficulties, formerly mentioned, which adhere to these two systems of predestination.

The Arminians and Calvinists differ as to the measure

* A Deo habemus quod homines sumus, a nobis ipsis quod justi. —*Pelagius.*

of that injury which the moral powers of human nature received from the transgression of our first parents: but they agree in acknowledging that man has fallen from his original rectitude; that there is an universal corruption of the whole race, the influence of which extends to the understanding, the will, and the affections; that in this state no man is of himself capable of giving any uniform and effectual resistance to temptation, of extricating himself from the dominion of sin, or of attaining, by the exercise of his own powers, that character which is connected with a full participation of the blessings of the Gospel. They agree that the Father of spirits can act upon the minds of men so as to administer a remedy to this corruption, and to recover them to the practice of virtue; and they think it probable, even from the light of nature, that he will exert his divine power, and employ that various access which his continual presence with his creatures gives him, in accomplishing this gracious purpose. They find the hope of this expressed, as a dictate of reason, in many passages of heathen writers; they find it inspiring all the prayers for divine assistance which occur both in the Old and in the New Testament; and they find it confirmed by many promises, which good men under the dispensation of the law embraced, but the complete fulfilment of which was looked for as one of the peculiar characters of that better dispensation which the law announced. When they read these words of Jeremiah, quoted in the Epistle to the Hebrews, x. 16, 17, "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more,"—they conceive the prophet and the apostle to have understood, that with the pardon of sin—that blessing which was typified by the sacrifices of the law, but is truly obtained by the sacrifice of the cross,—there is conjoined under the Gospel an influence exerted by the Almighty upon the hearts and the minds of Christians; and that these two taken together make up the character and the excellency of that better covenant which came in place of the first. The Arminians and Calvinists agree farther, that the Holy Ghost is a person distinct from the Father and the Son;

that he is a divine person; and that he bears a part in accomplishing the salvation of mankind; that he inspired the prophets, who from the beginning of the world spake of this salvation, and cherished the expectation of it in the breasts of pious men; that having been given without measure to the man Christ Jesus, he descended, in fulfilment of his promise at the day of Pentecost, upon his apostles, and endowed them with those extraordinary powers which were necessary for the successful publication of the Gospel; that he continues to be the fountain of all spiritual influence—the distributor of those gifts to men which Jesus Christ received; and that the Father in all ages, upon account of the intercession of the Son, gives the Holy Spirit to his children. The Arminians and the Calvinists agree, that by the distribution of these gifts, the Holy Ghost exercises the office of the Sanctifier and Comforter of Christians; that he opens their understandings; that he renews them in the spirit of their minds; that he inclines their hearts to obey the truth; that he helps their infirmities; that all the graces in which they abound are the fruits of the Spirit; and that as many as are the children of God are led by the Spirit of God. They agree farther in expressing these influences of the Spirit by the word Grace. The Socinians contend that this use of the word is not warranted by Scripture; that the word in general signifies favour; that it is applied in a variety of meanings; but that as there is no unequivocal instance of the sacred writers employing this word to express an influence exerted by God upon the mind, all that is said in systems of theology about grace is founded upon a perversion of Scripture. To the Arminians and Calvinists, on the other hand, it appears that there are passages in the New Testament, where the sense requires that the word be understood with the meaning which they affix to it. Of this kind are Heb. iv. 16, 1 Cor. xv. 10. The controversy about the Scripture meaning of the word grace is not of much importance. Although in this, as in many other instances, the Scriptures may have been quoted and applied more from a regard to the sound than to the sense, and although the word grace may have been often understood to mean an influence upon the mind, when the sacred writers were speaking of the favour of God in ge-

néral, or of the dispensation of the Gospel, which, being the brightest display of his favour to man, is often called the grace of God, yet this does not afford any kind of argument against the reality of what is termed in theological language, grace, or even against the propriety of that use of the word. For it matters little what words are employed upon any subject, provided the sense affixed to them be clearly defined; and if there is various evidence in Scripture, as the Arminians and Calvinists agree in believing, that the Spirit of God does act immediately upon the mind of man, there is no word by which an influence so fraught with blessings can be more fitly marked than by the general word χαρις, *grace*; even although the passages, where the sacred writers have applied the word in that sense, were more equivocal than they really are.

With all these points of agreement, the difference between the Arminian and Calvinistic systems, as to the application of the remedy, is most material, because it respects the nature and the efficacy of that influence upon the mind, which in both systems is called by the name of grace. The Arminians, who believe that the death of Christ was an atonement for the sins of the whole world, which by redeeming all men from the curse put them into a situation in which they may be saved, believe, in conformity to this fundamental principle, that the death of Christ also purchased for all men means sufficient to bring them to salvation. And therefore, as they acknowledge that the corruption of human nature opposes obstacles to faith and repentance, which our natural powers are unable of themselves to surmount, they believe that the grace purchased by Christ restores all men to a situation, in which they may do those works which are well pleasing to God. This grace is called common, because it is given indifferently to all; preventing, because it comes before our own endeavours; exciting, because it stirs up our powers, naturally sluggish and averse from God. Of some measure of this grace, no man in any situation is supposed to be destitute. It accompanies the light of nature in heathen countries, as well as the preaching of the Gospel in those which are Christian; and every one who improves the measure given him is thereby prepared for more. From the smallest degrees of this grace, and the most unfavour-

able circumstances in which it can be given, those who are not wanting to themselves are certainly conducted to such degrees as produce faith and repentance; and all, whose minds have been regenerated by this exciting grace, receive what the Arminians call subsequent and co-operating grace;—subsequent, because it follows after conversion;—co-operating, because it concurs with human exertions in producing those moral virtues, which, having originated in that grace which is preventing, and being carried on to perfection by that which is subsequent, are fitly called the fruits of the Spirit.

As higher degrees of grace are supposed to be given in consequence of the improvement of those which were previous, the Arminians consider the efficacy of all grace as depending upon the reception which it meets with. They cannot say that it is of the nature of grace to be effectual; for although, according to their system, it be given to all with such impartiality, that he who believes had not originally a larger portion of grace than he who does not believe, yet there are many in whom it does not produce faith and repentance. It is purely, therefore, from the event that grace is to be distinguished as effectual or ineffectual; and the same grace being given to all, there is no other cause to which the difference in the event can be ascribed, than the difference in the character of those by whom it is received. As the event of the grace of God is conceived to depend upon men, it follows, according to this system, that the grace of God may be resisted, *i. e.* the obstacles opposed by the perverseness of the human will may be such as finally to prevent the effect of this grace. Accordingly, the Arminians find themselves obliged to give such an account of the nature of grace as admits of its being resistible. It was thus described by the first Arminians:—*Lenis suasio; nobilissimus agendi modus in conversione hominum, quæ fiat suasionibus, morali ratione consensum voluntatis producens.* The English phrase answering to this description is Moral Suasion; and the meaning of the phrase is thus explained by the best Arminian writers. They conceive that all that impossibility of keeping the commandments of God, which arises from the corruption of human nature, is removed by the grace of God; and that, while the word of God proposes

exhortations, warnings, and inducements, to man thus restored to the capacity of doing what is required of him, the Spirit of God opens his understanding to discern the force of these things, and is continually present with him, suggesting good thoughts, inspiring good desires, and, by the most seasonable, friendly, and gentle counsel, inclining his mind to his duty. This seasonable, friendly, and gentle counsel is called moral suasion; but this counsel may be rejected; for herein, say the Arminians, consists the liberty of man, that with every possible reason before him to choose one course he may choose another, and the influence of any other being cannot be of such a kind as certainly and effectually to determine his choice, without destroying his nature. After all the assistance and direction, therefore, which he can derive from the grace of God, he may believe or he may not believe; he may return to the habitual practice of sin after he has been converted; and, by abusing those means of grace which he had formerly improved, he may in the end fail of attaining salvation.

The account, which I have now given of the Arminian doctrine with regard to the nature and efficacy of the grace of God, is agreeable to the three last of the five articles in which the early Arminians stated their system. In these articles they discover an anxiety to vindicate themselves from the charge of Pelagianism, or from the appearance of ascribing so much to the natural powers of man, as to render the grace of God unnecessary.

3. Man has not saving faith from himself, and, being in a state of depravity and sin, he cannot by the exercise of his own free will, think or do any thing that is truly good; but it is necessary that he be regenerated and renewed by God in Christ through his Holy Spirit, in his mind, his affections, or his will, and all his faculties, that he may understand, think, will, and perform any good thing; according to that saying of Christ, "Without me ye can do nothing."

4. The fourth article, after saying that this grace of God is the beginning, the progress, and the perfection of all good, so that all our good works are to be ascribed to the grace of God in Christ, adds these words; But as to the manner of the operation of this grace, it is not irresistible;

for it is said in Scripture of many, that they resisted the Holy Spirit.

5. The fifth article, after mentioning the strength and assistance furnished to those who are united to Christ by a true faith, expresses a doubt whether they may not by their own negligence make shipwreck of a good conscience, and forfeit their interest in Christ. The later Arminians laid aside the language of doubt upon this subject, and said without hesitation, that those who, being united to Christ by faith, had been partakers of his grace, might through their own fault fall from a state of grace.

The Calvinistic system gives a very different view of the application of the remedy; and the difference may be traced back to its fundamental principle, that Christ did not die for all men, but for those of every nation who are in the end to be saved. Them only he delivers from the curse, and for them only he purchases those influences of the Spirit by which faith and repentance are produced. Others enjoy in common with them, the gifts of nature, the bounties of providence, the light of conscience; and all who live in a Christian country, by the motives proposed in the Gospel, and by the ordinances of religion, may be restrained from many open sins, and excited to many good actions. But that grace, which forms in the mind of man the character connected with salvation, is confined to those whom God hath chosen. Being conferred in execution of an unchangeable decree, it cannot fail of attaining its effect; and, being the action of the Creator upon the mind of the creature, it is able to surmount all that opposition and resistance which arises from the corruption of human nature. It is distinguished by the Calvinists from that continual influence which the Supreme Cause exerts throughout his creation, and by which he upholds his creatures in being, preserves the faculties which he gave them, and may, in some sense, be said to concur with all their actions. And it is conceived to be an extraordinary supernatural influence of the Creator, by which the disorders which sin had introduced into the faculties of human nature are corrected, and the mind is transformed and renewed, and created again unto good works. There have not been wanting some who have attempted to explain the manner of this supernatural influence. But the

wiser Calvinists, without entangling themselves in an inextricable labyrinth of expressions which after every attempt to affix clear ideas to them must remain unintelligible, rest in that caution which our Lord gave, when he spoke to Nicodemus upon the subject. John iii. 7, 8, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again: The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Although we cannot give a satisfying account of the causes why the wind blows at a particular season from one quarter, or why it ceases just when it does, we do not doubt of the fact, because we see and feel its effects. So, although the manner of the operation of the Spirit is not an object of sense, and cannot be explained by words, we may be assured of the reality of the operation from its effects. When we see such a change upon the disposition and the life of the regenerate, as cannot be accounted for by any natural means, we are led to acknowledge the power of the Divine Agent by whom the change was produced; and we perceive the propriety with which the Scriptures, in speaking of this change, make use of such expressions as being born again, creation, resurrection. For the figure used in these expressions tends to mislead, unless the action marked by them implies an exertion of power, the effect of which is independent of any co-operation or any resistance in the subject of the action; and therefore they may be considered as indicating such an operation of the Spirit, as effectually removes that corruption of the powers of human nature which nothing less can remedy.

This supernatural influence is seldom exerted without the use of means; in other words, although the means of removing the corruption of human nature derive their efficacy entirely from the Spirit of God, yet, in accomplishing this object, the Spirit of God ordinarily employs the exhortations, the promises, and the threatenings of the word of God, the counsel and example of good men, and all those instruments which have a tendency to improve the human mind. Hence that change which is the work of the Spirit, is not instantaneous, but consists of many previous steps, of many preparatory dispositions and affec-

tions, and of a gradual progress in goodness;—by all which a man is conducted from that state of degeneracy, which is natural to the posterity of Adam, to the possession of that character without which none can be saved. His understanding is enlightened with the knowledge of the truth,—his will is inclined to follow the dictates of his understanding,—he pursues a certain line of conduct, because it is his choice,—and he has the feeling of the most perfect liberty, because he becomes willing to do that from which formerly he was averse. Augustine expressed the effect of this influence by the significant phrase, *victrix delectatio*,—a delight in the commandments of God, which overcomes every inferior appetite; and all the Calvinists, when they speak of the efficacy of divine grace, would be understood to mean that the grace of God acts upon man, not as a machine but as a reasonable being.

As the grace of God, which is conceived to derive its efficacy from his power of fulfilling his purpose in those for whom it is destined, overcomes all the opposition with which it is at first received, so it continues to be exerted amidst all the frailty and corruption which adhere to human nature in a present state. It is not exerted to such a degree as to preserve any man from every kind of sin. For God is pleased to teach Christians humility, by keeping up the remembrance of that state out of which they were delivered, and to quicken their aspirations after higher degrees of goodness, by leaving them to struggle with temptation, and to feel manifold infirmities. But although no man is enabled in this life to attain to perfection, the grace of God preserves those to whom it is given from drawing back to perdition. The doctrine of the perseverance of the saints flows necessarily from that decree, by which they were from eternity chosen to salvation, and from the manner in which according to the Calvinistic system the decree was executed; and all the principles of the system must be renounced before we can believe that any of those for whom Christ died, and who consequently become partakers of his grace, can fall from that grace either finally—by which is meant that they shall not in the end be saved,—or totally, by which is meant that they shall at any period of their lives commit sins so heinous and so presumptuous, and persist in them

so obstinately, as at that period to forfeit entirely the divine favour.

All the parts of that delineation which I have now given are found in Chapters IX. X. XVII. of the Confession of Faith. The whole doctrine is not expressed in the tenth Article of the Church of England, but we consider it to be implied in the seventeenth.

CHAP. IX.

ARMINIAN AND CALVINISTIC SYSTEMS COMPARED.

AFTER the view which I have given of the two great systems of opinion concerning the extent and the application of that remedy which the Gospel brings, we are prepared to estimate the difficulties that adhere to them. As every system which, with our limited information, we can hold upon subjects so extensive and so magnificent, must be attended with difficulties, it is not incumbent upon us to answer all the questions which our system may suggest; and we have given a sufficient answer to many of them, when we show that the same questions, or others not more easily solved, are suggested by the opposite system. But as difficulties are of real weight when they imply a contradiction to some received truth, we are called to defend the system of opinion which we hold, by showing that it is not subversive of the nature of man or inconsistent with the nature of God.

SECTION I.

THE Arminian system appears, upon a general view, most satisfying to a pious and benevolent mind. Pardon procured by the death of Christ for all that repent and believe, when conjoined with an administration of the means of grace sufficient to bring all men to faith and repentance, forms a remedy suited to the extent of the disease;

a remedy from which none are excluded by any circumstance foreign to themselves, and which, if it does not in the end deliver all from the evils of sin, fails not, through any defect in its own nature, or any partiality in the Being from whom it proceeded, but purely through the obstinacy and perverseness of those to whom it is offered. But while this account of the Gospel appears to derive, from its correspondence with our notions of the goodness and justice of God, the strongest internal recommendation, it is found to labour under these three difficulties. 1. The supposition of an administration of the means of grace sufficient to bring all men to faith and repentance, upon which this system proceeds, appears to be contradicted by fact. 2. This system, while in words it ascribes all to the grace of God, does in effect resolve our salvation into something independent of that grace. 3. This system seems to imply a failure in the purpose of the Almighty, which is not easily reconciled with our notions of his sovereignty.

1. It does not appear agreeable to fact, that there is an administration of the means of grace sufficient to bring all men to faith and repentance. For although there is nothing in the nature of the Gospel to prevent it from becoming an universal religion, yet the fact is, that by much the greatest part of the world does not enjoy the benefit of its instructions.* And although the imperfect propagation of the Gospel may be owing to the corruption and indifference of Christians, yet with regard to the inhabitants of those nations to whom the most distant intimation of its existence never extended, it cannot surely be said that there has been any want of inquiry on their part. The Arminians are obliged to resolve this manifest inequality in dispensing the advantages for attaining faith and repentance into the sovereignty of God, who imparts his free gifts to whom he will. Still however they do not abandon their principle; for they contend that the grace of God accompanies the light of nature, and that all who improve this universal revelation are conducted by that grace to higher degrees of knowledge. But here also the fact does not appear to accord with their system. For

* Book I. Ch. ix. 4.

the light of nature, although universal, is most unequal. In many countries superstition is rendered so inveterate by education, custom, and example, and the state of society is so unfavourable to the improvement of the mind, that none of the inhabitants has the means of extricating himself from error; and even in those more enlightened parts of the world, where, by the cultivation of the powers of reason or the advantages of foreign instruction, men have risen to more honourable conceptions of the Deity, there does not appear any possibility of their attaining to the faith of Christ. For, as the apostle speaks, Rom. x. 17, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard, and how shall they hear without a preacher?" The Socinians, indeed, say, that all in every situation, who act up to the light afforded them, may be saved, without regard being had to the merits of Christ. But this opinion the Arminians strongly disclaim, and choose rather to say, that those who improve the measure of knowledge derived from the works of nature, and the grace of God which accompanies it, are, in some extraordinary manner, made acquainted with the doctrine of Christ, so as to attain before they die that faith in him which the means afforded them could not produce. And thus the Arminians are obliged, with regard to the greatest part of mankind, to give up their fundamental position, that sufficient means of grace are administered to all, and to have recourse to the production of faith by an immediate impression of the Spirit of God upon the mind. The Arminians, feeling the force of this difficulty, leave, piously and wisely leave, the fate of that great part of mankind who do not enjoy the Gospel, to the mercy of God in Christ; and, in their confessions of faith, they confine their doctrine, concerning the universal application of the remedy, to those who are called by the word. To this call they give the name of an election to grace and to the means of salvation, which they distinguish from an election to glory. Election to glory is the destination of eternal happiness to those who persevere in faith and good works. Election to grace is understood to be common to all who live in a Christian country, and to imply the giving to every one, by the preaching of the word and the power

of the Spirit accompanying it, that grace which is sufficient to produce faith and to promote repentance unto life.

But even after the Arminians have thus corrected and limited their doctrine with regard to the sufficiency of the means of grace, there remain two objections to it in point of fact. The first arises from the very unequal circumstances in which the inhabitants of different Christian countries are placed. In some countries the Scriptures are given to the people, that they may search them; in others, they are withheld. In some countries the Gospel is exhibited in a corrupt form, which tends to degrade the understanding and pervert the moral conduct; in others, it is presented in its native simplicity, as cherishing every exalted affection and forming the mind to virtue. In the same countries there are infinite diversities amongst individuals as to their intellectual powers, the measure of their information, their employments, their pursuits, their education, their society, the inducements to act properly, or the temptations to sin which arise from their manner of life. All these circumstances, having an effect upon the moral character, must be regarded in the Arminian system as a branch of the administration of the means of grace, because they are instruments which the Spirit of God may employ in that moral influence which he is considered as exerting over the mind of man. By means of these circumstances, some are placed in a more favourable situation for attaining faith than others; the same moral suasion, by which some are preserved from almost any approach to iniquity, becomes insufficient to restrain others from gross transgression; and the Sovereign of the universe, who has ordained all these circumstances, thus appears to discriminate, in respect of the means of salvation, those very persons who in this system are said to be equally elected to grace. It may be said, indeed, that the secret operation of divine grace counterbalances the diversity of outward circumstances; so that, taking the internal assistance and the external means together, all who live in a Christian country are upon a footing. This is the method of answering the objection adopted by Grotius, and other able defenders of Arminianism. But it is a departure from the principles of that system; for it is substituting, in place of

an administration of the means of grace sufficient for all, an administration in many instances defective; and, in place of an internal grace common and equal to all, a grace imparted differently to different persons, according to circumstances.

The second objection, in point of fact, to the supposition that in every Christian country there is such an administration of the means of grace as is sufficient to bring all men to faith, arises from this undeniable truth, that, amongst those to whom the Gospel is preached, and in whose circumstances there is not that kind of diversity which can account for the difference, some believe and some do not believe. Some, with all the outward advantages which the publication of the Gospel affords, continue the servants of sin; whilst others attain, by the same advantages, that measure of perfection which is consistent with the present state of humanity. From this fact the Calvinists infer the reality of an inward discriminating grace, which appears to them the only satisfying account of the different fruits that proceed from the same external advantages, and which, although it is not, like the diversity of outward circumstances, an object of sense, may be certainly known by its effects. But the Arminians, instead of admitting this inference, readily answer the objection which seems to arise from this fact, by saying, that the grace which is sufficient to all, proves ineffectual with regard to many, because it is opposed. It is their own fault —the voluntary resistance which they might not have made, that prevents the grace of God from producing in them the effect which it was intended to produce in all, and which it actually does produce in others. To those who repent and believe, the same sufficient grace is imparted; by them also it might be resisted; but because they do not resist, it proves effectual. Now, this is an answer to the objection; that is, it gives a reason why that grace, which the Arminians say is sufficient to all who hear the Gospel, proves ineffectual with regard to many. But it remains to be inquired, whether the reason is such as ought to enter into a theological system, or whether the admitting of this reason is not pregnant with objections no less formidable to their system, than the fact which it was brought to explain. For,

2. The second difficulty under which the Arminian system labours is this, that, while in words it ascribes all to the grace of God, it does in effect resolve our salvation into something independent of that grace.

It was the principle of the Pelagians that the grace of God respects only the remission of sins, and that it is not given *in adjutoreum, ne in posterum peccata committantur.* Another of their aphorisms was, *ad scientiam nos habere gratiam Christi, non ad charitatem.* Arminius and his followers were most anxious to guard their system from the appearance of approaching to these principles. They acknowledged that man in his present state is not able to think or to do any thing truly good of himself; that he must be renewed in all his faculties by the Spirit of God; and that all our good works are to be ascribed to the grace of God in Christ. They renounce, by the terms in which the articles of their faith are expressed, even that modification of the Pelagian principles which was introduced soon after they were first published, and which is known by the name of Semi-Pelagianism. It was held by the Semi-Pelagians, that, although man is unable to bring any good work to perfection, yet the first motions towards a good life, sorrow for sin, desire of pardon, purposes of obedience, and the first acts of faith in Christ, are the natural exercise of human powers, proceeding from the constitution and circumstances of man, without any supernatural grace; that to all in whom God observes these preparatory dispositions he gives, for the sake of Christ, his Holy Spirit; and that, by the influence of this Spirit continually assisting their powers, they are enabled to make progress, and to persevere in the life of faith and obedience which they had begun. But the Arminians wish to discriminate themselves from the Semi-Pelagians, by mentioning, in their confessions of faith, a preventing grace, *gratia præveniens seu præcedanea;* which comes before, not only our works, but our purposes and desires of doing good;—by saying that the grace of God is the beginning as well as the progress and perfection of all good; —and by acknowledging that, without his grace, man cannot understand, or think, or will any thing that is good. All those words, however, which they multiply in speaking of the grace of God, are accompanied with a

clause which very much enervates their significancy. For the conclusion of the fourth article runs thus: "With regard to the manner of the operation of that grace, it is not irresistible; for it is said, in the seventh chapter of the book of Acts, and in many other places of Scripture, that they resisted the Holy Spirit." And, in place of the doubt expressed in the fifth article, whether those who have been united to Christ by true faith may not, by their own negligence, fall from grace, the Arminians, in the subsequent confessions of their faith, speak without hesitation of Christians who fall, through their own fault, from the faith which had been produced in them by the Spirit of God, and with regard to whom all the actions of the Spirit of God cease, because they do not fulfil the conditions required on their part. It is to be observed, that by the grace which may be resisted, the Arminians do not mean merely that grace which calls men to the knowledge of the Gospel, and furnishes them with the outward means of salvation, but that influence exerted by the Spirit of God upon the mind, which they are accustomed to describe by a multitude of words; and what they mean by calling this grace irresistible, is not merely that opposition is made to it; for those who hold the corruption of human nature in the highest degree, are the most ready to admit this opposition. It is matter of experience; and none can deny that it is often mentioned in Scripture. But the Arminians, by calling the grace of God resistible, mean that it may be defeated; in other words, that the resistance given by a person whom the Spirit of God calls to faith and obedience, may be such as to render him unfit for believing and for obeying the divine will; so that he either remains unconverted after all the operations of grace upon his soul, or he returns after a temporary conversion to the state in which he was before. Here, then, is the grace of God supposed to be unable to attain its effect of itself, and that effect supposed to depend upon the concurrence of man. It is allowed by the Arminians, that none can be saved without the grace of God; but it is not allowed that the reason why some are saved and not others, is to be found in that grace. For while the grace of God and the will of man are conceived to be partial causes, concurring in the production of the same effect, the grace of God is

only a remote cause of salvation—a cause operating indifferently upon all, sufficient indeed but often ineffectual. The proximate, specific cause of salvation, by which the effects of the universal cause are discriminated, is to be found in the qualities of the subject which receives the grace of God, since upon these qualities it depends whether this grace shall overcome or shall be counteracted.

The Arminians attempt to remove this objection to their system, by reasoning in the following manner. Although God is omnipotent, he cannot put forth his irresistible power in communicating his grace to the mind of man, because he must govern his creatures according to their natures. But a grace which cannot be resisted would destroy the morality of human actions; and, instead of improving the character of a reasonable agent, would leave no room for any thing that deserves the name of virtue. It follows, therefore, from the nature of man, and the purpose for which grace is bestowed upon him, that it must be left in his power and in his choice, whether he will comply with it or not; in other words, the grace of God must be resistible in this sense and to this amount, that its efficacy must depend upon the concurrence of the being on whom it is exerted.

This reasoning of the Arminians constitutes one of their chief objections to the Calvinistic system, which represents the mind of man as effectually determined by the grace of God; and if the objection has all the weight which the reasoning seems to imply, that system cannot be true; for it is impossible that that can be a just account of the grace of God, which is inconsistent with the character of man, and subversive of morality. The objection will be discussed, when we advance to the difficulties that belong to the Calvinistic system. In the mean time, it is to be remembered that the Arminians, in their zeal to steer clear of this difficulty, have adopted such an account of the grace of God, as implies that, antecedently to its operations, the minds of some men are disposed to comply with it, and the minds of others to reject it; and that, in whatever words they choose to magnify the grace of God, they cannot regard it as the cause of this difference. For if the grace which is given indifferently to two persons, John and Judas, which is sufficient for both, and which may be resisted

by both, is not resisted by John, and in consequence of that non-resistance conducts him to salvation, but is resisted by Judas, and in consequence of that resistance proves ineffectual with regard to him, the true cause of the efficacy and inefficacy of the grace lies in the minds of these two persons. "Thou didst give to my neighbour," may the former say, "as to me: but my will has improved what thou gavest, while the will of my neighbour has resisted all thine operations." This language, which the Arminians must suppose every one that is saved entitled to hold to the Almighty, by implying that man has something independent of the grace of God whereof he may boast, and whereby he may distinguish himself from other men in the sight of God, not only contradicts the doctrine of original sin, and those lessons of humility which the Gospel uniformly teaches, but seems also to involve the Arminians themselves in contradiction. For while they say that no man is able of himself to understand, to think, or to will what is good, they suppose that only some men retain that carnal mind which the Scriptures call enmity to God, and by which the grace of God is defeated; but that others are at all times ready of themselves to yield that compliance with the influences of the Spirit, by which they are rendered effectual. And thus, while in words they ascribe all good works to the grace of God, they suspend the beginning, the progress, and the continuance of these good works upon the will of man.

3. The last difficulty which adheres to the Arminian system is, that it proceeds upon the supposition of a failure of the purpose of the Almighty, which it is not easy to reconcile with our notions of his sovereignty.

In this system the Almighty is conceived to have a purpose of bringing all men to salvation by Christ, and, in execution of this purpose, to furnish all men with sufficient means of salvation: yet notwithstanding this purpose, and the execution of it by the grace of God, many continue in sin. Dr. Clarke has stated the difficulty, and has given the Arminian solution of it in one of his sermons upon the grace of God; and as it is manifest from all his writings that he is there speaking his own sentiments, it will not be thought that I do any injustice to the Arminian system, by stating the solution of this third difficulty, in the words

of an author so distinguished for the clearness of his conceptions, and the accuracy of his expressions, as Dr. Clarke. "The design of God in the gracious declarations of the Gospel is to bring all men, by the promise of pardon, to repentance and amendment here, and thereby to eternal salvation hereafter. The only difficulty here is, that which arises and indeed very obviously, from comparing the actual event of things with the declarations of God's gracious intention and design. If God designed by the gracious terms of the Gospel to bring all men to salvation, how comes the extent of it to be confined within so narrow a compass, and the effect of it to be in experience so inconsiderable, even where in profession it seems to have universally prevailed? The answer to this is, that in all moral matters, the intention or design of God never signifies (as it does always in natural things) an intention of the event actually and necessarily to be accomplished; but (which alone is consistent with the nature of moral things) an intention of all the means necessary on his part to the putting that event into the power of the proper and immediate agents." *

According to this solution, that determination of the actions of men, which forms part of the Calvinistic system, is inconsistent with the nature of man, because the intention of God in moral matters never can go on to the event without destroying the character of moral agents. This objection to the Calvinistic system is the same in substance with that which I stated under the former head, and will be considered afterwards. In the mean time, it is to be remembered, that the Arminians are obliged either to deny that there is in God an intention to bring all men to salvation, or to admit that a great part of what is done in his creation is independent of his will. For although all the actions of wicked men in this world, and their everlasting condition hereafter, are, according to the Arminian system, foreseen by God, and being foreseen, may be connected in the great plan of his providence with other events which are under his power, yet they are foreseen as arising from a cause over which he has no control,—from the will of man, which, after all his opera-

* Serm. XII. Vol. II.

tions, determined itself in many cases to choose the very opposite of that which he intended, and endeavoured to make it choose. If it shall appear that this emancipation of the actions of the creature from the direction of the Creator is an unavoidable consequence of the character of reasonable beings, we must acquiesce in what appears to us an imperfection in the divine government. But until the inconsistency between the providence of God, I mean not merely his foresight, but his determination, and the freedom of his reasonable creatures be clearly established, we should be led, by all the views of the sovereignty of the Creator which reason and Scripture give us, to suppose that no part of the universe is withdrawn from his control: and the harmony of the great plan of Providence must appear to us inconsistent with the motley combination of natural events appointed by God, and actions of his creatures contrary to his purpose.

The amount of the three difficulties which have now been stated, may be thus shortly summed up. The Arminian system lays down, as a fundamental position, an administration of the means of grace sufficient to bring all men to faith and repentance; a position which it is not possible to reconcile with what appears to be the fact: it resolves the salvation of those who are saved into the character of their mind antecedently to the operations of divine grace; and it resolves the final reprobation of others into actions performed by the creatures of God, opposite to those which he furnished them with all the means necessary for performing, and conducting to an end different from that which he intended.

SECTION II.

The Arminian system was an attempt made by those who disclaimed Socinian principles, to get rid of the difficulties which belong to the Calvinistic system. The embarrassment and inconsistency with which we have seen that attempt to be attended, and from which very able men have not found it possible to disentangle them-

selves, is a proof that it is not an easy matter to devise a middle system between Socinianism and Calvinism. But if Calvinism be really involved in those insuperable difficulties which are perpetually in the mouths of its adversaries; if it subverts the nature of man, and presents the most unworthy conceptions of the Father of all, it cannot be true. The attempts to get rid of these difficulties may have been hitherto unsuccessful: but it is impossible to adopt any system to which such difficulties adhere; and it were better, it may be thought, to acquiesce under a consciousness of our own ignorance in the embarrassment of the Arminians, or even to advance to the simple unencumbered scheme of Socinus, than by following what we account truth far beyond the measure of our understandings, to confound all our notions both of God and of man.

Before we come, however, to this desperate resolution, it is proper to bestow a very careful examination upon the difficulties which belong to the Calvinistic system. They may be magnified by the misrepresentations of its enemies: they may have arisen from some weakness in the reasoning or some narrowness in the views of its friends: there may be no other difficulties than such as our minds must always expect to feel in every effort to form a conception of the obscure and magnificent subjects about which the two systems are conversant: and they may belong to the Arminian, in as far as it keeps clear of Socinianism, no less than to the Calvinistic. I enter upon the examination of these difficulties with a thorough conviction of its being possible to state them in such a manner, that they shall not afford any reasonable man a just ground for rejecting the system: and my examination of them will have the appearance, which, in my situation is decent, of an apology for Calvinism. I certainly desire that every one of my students should think as favourably of that system as I do, because, if they become licentiates or ministers of this church, they have to subscribe a solemn declaration, that they believe it to be true. But their conviction ought to arise from their own study—not from my teaching. They bring with them, from their previous studies, an acquaintance with the leading principles upon which my apology turns, sufficient to enable them to judge how far

it is a fair one: and even had I that attachment to a system, which I am conscious I have not, which would lead me to defend it by misrepresentation, I must be sensible that this would be the certain method of giving them an unfavourable impression of the system which I wish to recommend.

The objections to the Calvinistic system, however multiplied in words or in divisions, may be reduced to two. It is conceived to be inconsistent with the nature of man as a free moral agent; and it is conceived to represent the Almighty in a light repugnant to our notions of his moral attributes.

SECTION III.

THE Calvinistic system is conceived to be inconsistent with the nature of man as a free moral agent.

It is acknowledged by all, that liberty is essential to the character of a moral agent; that we are not accountable for those actions which we are compelled to perform; that in every part of our conduct, in which external force does not operate upon the motions of our bodies, we have a feeling that whatever we do we might have done otherwise; that we deserve praise for our good actions, because we might have acted wrong; and that we deserve blame for our bad actions, because we might have acted well. In these points all are agreed. But it is said by those who do not hold the Calvinistic system, that the effectual irresistible grace, which, according to that system, is communicated to the elect, and by which they are infallibly determined to a certain line of conduct, degrades them from the character of agents to that of patients,—machines acted upon by another being, and thus destroys the morality of those very actions which they are determined to perform. As it is impossible that a religion proceeding from the Author of human nature can so directly subvert the principles of that nature, the manner of applying the Gospel remedy, which is essential to the Calvinistic system, is considered as of itself a demonstrative proof that this system exhibits a false view of Christianity.

The whole force of this objection turns upon the ideas

that are formed of the liberty of a moral agent. To those who form one idea of liberty, the objection constitutes an insurmountable difficulty. To those who form another idea, it admits of a satisfying answer.

There is one idea of liberty, adopted and strenuously defended by Dr. Reid, in his Essays on the Active Powers, which I shall give in his words. "By the liberty of a moral agent, I understand a power over the determinations of his own will. If, in any action, he had power to will what he did, or not to will it, in that action he is free. But if, in every voluntary action, the determination of his will be the necessary consequence of something involuntary in the state of his mind, or of something in his external circumstances, he is not free; he has not what I call the liberty of a moral agent, but is subject to necessity."* The liberty here defined is sometimes called liberty of indifference, because it is supposed that, after all the circumstances which can lead to the choice of one thing are presented, the mind remains *in equilibrio*, till she proceeds to exert her own sovereign power in making the choice. The exertions of this power are conceived to be independent of every thing external: the mind alone determines; and there is no fixed infallible connexion between her determinations and any foreign object.

The definition of liberty given by Dr. Reid is that which Arminian writers adopt. Some of them speak with more accuracy than others; but all of them agree that the liberty of a moral agent consists in the self-determining power; that although he is frequently determined in his actions and resolutions by some cause foreign to the mind, he is not constantly and invariably so determined; and that as the mind has a power of choosing without any reason, it is in every case uncertain how far she will exert this power, and consequently it is uncertain what the choice of the mind will prove, until it be made. Upon this foundation the Arminians build the impossibility of an absolute decree electing particular persons to eternal life, and giving them the means of attaining it. They say that faith and repentance, being the exercise of a self-determining power, originate purely in the mind: that the Almighty cannot give

* Essay IV. ch. i.

an efficacious determining grace without destroying this self-determining power; and therefore that all the decrees of God, in relation to moral agents, were either from eternity suspended upon their own determinations, or become peremptory only by his foreseeing what these determinations are to be.

Although this account of the liberty of moral agents be adopted by the Arminians, it is not easily reconciled with the opinion which they profess to hold, with regard to the extent and the infallibility of the divine foreknowledge. For as the determinations of free agents are the exertions of a power which is conceived to be unconnected and uncontrolled in its operations, there does not appear to us any method by which they can be certainly foreknown. When a future event is connected with any thing present, that connexion is a principle of knowledge with regard to it: the more intimate the connexion is, the future event may be the more certainly known; and if the connexion be indissoluble, a being to whom it is known is as certain that the future event will exist, as that any present object now is. But if a future event has no connexion with any thing present, it cannot be seen in its cause; and the Socinian conclusion seems to be the natural one, that it cannot be foreseen at all. The Arminians, indeed, distinguish their system from Socinianism by rejecting this conclusion. For although they consider the actions of moral agents to be contingent in this sense of the word, that they are not connected with any preceding event as their cause, and although they do not pretend to explain the manner in which such events can be certainly foreknown, yet they admit their being foreknown by God, and upon his infallible foreknowledge of them they build what they call the decree of election.

The difficulty of reconciling what has been called liberty of indifference with the infallible foreknowledge of God, is not the only objection to this account of liberty. Liberty belongs to an agent, not to a faculty. A power in the mind to determine its own determinations is either unmeaning, or supposes, contrary to the first principles of philosophy, something to arise without a cause; and it lands those by whom it is defended in various inconsistencies. These points it is not my business to state more particularly. They are unfolded in the chapter of Mr.

Locke's Essay, entitled, On Power; and they are elucidated with much metaphysical acuteness, and with great fulness of illustration, in Edwards's Essay on Free-will. On the other hand, Dr. Clarke has stated the Arminian account of liberty in a close and guarded manner,—in a form the most accurate, and the least objectionable, that the subject will admit of. This statement occurs in different parts of Dr. Clarke's works; particularly in his Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God, and in some of his replies to papers of Leibnitz. One of Dr. Whitby's discourses on the Five Points is an essay on the freedom of the will of man. The Arminian account of liberty is fully stated by King in his Essay on the Origin of Evil; and there is a defence of it, loose, but copious and plausible, in the Essay already referred to, by Dr. Reid, On the Liberty of Moral Agents.

Without pursuing the investigation how far liberty of indifference is rational and consistent, I proceed to state the grounds of that other idea of the liberty of moral agents, which is essential and fundamental in the Calvinistic system.

The liberty of a moral agent consists in the power of acting according to his choice; and those actions are free, which are performed without any external compulsion or restraint, in consequence of the determinations of his own mind. The determinations of the mind are formed agreeably to the laws of its nature, by the exercise of its powers in attention, deliberation, and choice: they are its own determinations, because they proceed upon the views which it entertains of the subject in reference to which it determines; and the manner in which the determinations are formed implies that essential distinction between mind and matter, in consequence of which mind is by its constitution susceptible of a moral character. Matter is acted upon by other objects, and receives from this impulse a particular figure or motion; but it has no consciousness of the change induced upon its state, no powers to put forth in accomplishing the change, no choice of the effect which is to follow. There is a physical impossibility that the effect can be any other than that which may be calculated from taking into account the quantity and direction of the impulse, in conjunction with the size, the quality, and the situation of the body which receives it. But this

indifference to every kind of impression, which enters into our conception of body, and in consequence of which we give it the epithets passive and inert, is repugnant to our idea of mind. We conceive that the actions of a man originate in the exertions of his mind; that powers are there put forth; that the mind makes a selection out of many objects, any one of which it was not physically impossible to choose; that in the preference given to those means which are employed to bring about an end, there is a choice—a will discovered, which renders the mind worthy of praise or blame, and gives to the conduct that direction by which it is denominated either good or bad.

This exertion of the innate powers of action, by which mind is distinguished from matter, may be called the self-determining power of the mind; and if this were all that the Arminians meant by that phrase, the Calvinists would readily join in the use of it. But it is to be observed, that a general principle of activity, and a determination to a particular mode of action, are totally different: and after we have admitted that the actions of a man originate in the exertions of his mind, it remains to be inquired what determines the mind to one kind of exertion rather than another. The Arminians say the mind determines itself; which to the Calvinists appears to be no answer to the question, because in their opinion it means no more than that the mind has a power of determining itself. They hold that no event happens, either in the natural or in the moral world, without a cause. They hold that God, who exists necessarily, is the only Being who has the reason of his existence in himself. Because he now is, he always was, and he always will be. But every other being is contingent, i. e. it may be or it may not be: the reason of its existence, therefore, cannot be in itself, but must be in something else. The whole universe is contingent, deriving the reason of its existence from the will of the Creator; and every particular being or event in the universe has that connexion with something going before it, by which it forms part of the plan of Providence, and although known to us only when it comes into existence, was certain from the beginning, and was known as certain to Him in whose mind the whole plan originated.

These general principles, which constitute the foundation of the Calvinistic system, are equally applicable to

the events of the natural and the moral world. The various changes upon matter, which are the events of the natural world, arise from a succession of operations, every one of which, being the effect of something previous, becomes in its turn the cause of something that follows. The particular determinations of mind, which may be considered as events arising in the moral world, have their causes also which we are accustomed to call motives, that is, inducements to act in a particular manner, which arise from the objects presented to the mind, and the views of those objects which the mind entertains. The causes of the events in the natural world are efficient causes, which act upon matter; the causes of events in the moral world are final causes, with reference to which the mind, in which the action originates, proceeds, voluntarily and deliberately, to put forth its own powers. But the direction of the action toward its final cause is not less certain than the direction of the motion produced in an inert passive substance, by the force impressed upon it, which is the efficient cause of the motion. While I continue to view an object in a particular light, its influence upon my conduct continues. While I propose to myself a certain end, and perceive that certain means are necessary to attain that end, I employ those means. If I propose other ends, or change my opinion as to the means, there will be a consequent change in my conduct.

Although the determinations of mind thus admit of certainty, by means of their connexion with final causes, this certainty is essentially different from absolute necessity. A thing is said to be necessary, when its opposite implies a contradiction. The three angles of a triangle must be equal to two right angles. Absolute necessity, therefore, excludes the possibility of choice, because, when of two things one must be, and the other cannot be, there is no room for preferring the one to the other. But two opposite determinations of mind are equally possible; both being contingent, either the one or the other may be; and the certainty that one of them shall be, is only what is called moral necessity, which is in truth no necessity at all; because it arises not from the impossibility of the other determination, but merely from the sufficiency of the causes that are employed to produce the effect. The word effect implies, in every case, the previous existence of

causes sufficient for its production. It appears because they are sufficient; so that their sufficiency involves the certainty of its appearing. In every determination that is finally taken, there was this sufficiency of causes; and, consequently, before it was taken, there was a certainty that it would be such as it is. Yet, in all its determinations, the mind acts according to its nature, deliberates, judges, chooses, without any feeling of restraint, but with a full impression that it is exerting its own powers.

If the determinations of moral agents are thus certainly directed by motives, it is plain that the Almighty, whose will gave existence to the universe, and by whose pleasure every cause operates and every effort is produced, gives their origin to these determinations, by the execution of the great plan of his providence. For as there entered into his plan all those efficient causes whose successive operation produces the motions and changes of the material world, so there are brought forward, in succession, by the execution of this plan, all those objects which present themselves to the mind as final causes. Could we suppose a being, who, without any influence in ordering the connexion of things, foresaw, from the beginning, what that connexion would be, and had a mind capable of comprehending the whole series, he would, at the same time, foresee all the exertions of mind in reference to final causes. And if the being who possesses this foresight is no other than the Almighty, upon whose will the whole disposition of the events that are connected together depends, it is plain that, by altering this disposition, he would alter those exertions of mind which it calls forth, and, therefore, that all the exertions which are made constitute a part of his plan. But this does not, in the smallest degree, diminish what we call the liberty of moral agents. For final causes operate upon them according to their nature, in the same manner as if there were no such foresight and pre-ordination; they shun what is evil; they desire what is good; they are directed in their determinations by the light in which objects appear to them, without inquiring—without being impressed at the time of the direction with any desire to know—whether the good and evil came from the appointment of a wise being, or whether it arose fortuitously. It is present, and it operates because

it is present, not because it was foreseen. The mind feels its influence; and this feeling is totally distinct from the calm judgment which the mind may, upon reflection, form with regard to the origin of that influence.

It seems to result from the simple view we have taken of the subject, that the operation of motives will be uniform; that, as the strength of the motive may in every case be estimated, the effect will appear to correspond to its cause; and that there will be as little variety in the determinations of different minds, to whom the same final cause is presented, as in the motions of bodies which receive the same foreign impulse. Yet the fact is, that motives are very far from operating according to their apparent strength; that men are daily acting in contradiction to those moral inducements which, in all reason, ought to determine their conduct; and that the same motives, by which the determinations of one man are guided, have not an abiding influence, and often hardly any perceptible influence upon another man to whom they appear to be equally present. In some men, the understanding does not separate readily between truth and falsehood, or possesses in so slender a degree the faculty of comprehending the parts of a complex object, and of tracing consequences, that, in most cases, neither the end nor the means appear to them such as they really are. In other men, whose understanding is not defective, there are particular affections and inferior appetites, which either insensibly bias the will, and even pervert the understanding, or whose violence dictates a choice opposite to that which should result from the calm judgment of the understanding. And in many men there is an indecision—a want of vigour—an apprehension of difficulties, by which the final determinations of their minds, and the conduct which they pursue in life, are very different from what they themselves approve.

However plausible, then, the theory may be, which represents motives as final causes calling forth the exertions of mind, yet, when we come to apply this theory to fact, the real influence of these causes becomes a matter of very complicated calculation. We have to consider the strength of the motives not abstractedly, but in conjunction with the particular views formed by the mind to which they are presented; and there enters into the formation of these

views such a variety of circumstances respecting the state of the mind, generally unknown to observers, or inexplicable by them, and often unperceived by the mind itself, that the final determination appears in many cases nearly as wayward and capricious as if it was not connected with any thing previous, but the mind did really exert that uncontrolled sovereignty over its own determinations, to which the Arminians give the name of the self-determining power.

Notwithstanding this complication of circumstances that require to be considered in estimating the influence of motives, it is a matter of frequent experience, that we may be so well acquainted with the character of a person's mind, with all the springs of action by which he is moved, and with the situation in which he is placed, as to judge, with very little danger of mistake, what line of conduct he will pursue. And it is possible, by the information and suggestions that are conveyed to his understanding, and by a skilful and continued application of the objects best fitted for rousing his passions, and interesting his affections, to obtain an entire ascendency over his mind, and to command his sentiments and purposes. Many persons find it for their interest or their pleasure to study the art of leading the minds of others, and to devote themselves to the practice of this art; and the history of the world is full of instances in which the art has been successful. The success has sometimes proved hurtful to the civil and political liberties of mankind; but it has never been considered as impairing that liberty of which we are now speaking—the liberty which is necessary to constitute the persons thus led, moral agents. Their determinations, although foreseen by their sagacious neighbours before they were formed,—although formed upon the view of objects not sought after by themselves, but put in their way by those neighbours, were still their own determinations; the spontaneous result of their own active powers, in which they had all the feeling of choice, and liberty, and mental exertion; of self-approbation if they chose right; of self-reproach if they chose wrong.

Although the investigation of the character of others be to us laborious, and full of mistake; although our efforts to direct the minds of others be often rendered abortive

by some oversight and negligence on our part, by some change upon theirs, or by some unlooked-for event, we can easily account for this imperfection by the present state of human nature; and we do not find it difficult to rise, from what we ourselves experience, to the conception of that intuitive knowledge, and that entire direction of the determinations of mind, which belong to the Supreme Being. He who formed the human heart knows what is in man; he knows our thoughts afar off, long before they arise in our breasts—long before the objects by which they are to be excited have been presented to us. He, who is intimately present through his whole creation, marks, without fatigue, or the possibility of misapprehension, every the minutest shade that distinguishes the character of one man from that of another; every difference in their situation, every variety in the views which they form of the same object. And all these things are known to him not merely as they arise. They originated in that plan which, from the beginning, was formed in the Divine Mind, and which was executed in time by his pleasure; so that their being future, or present, or past, does not make the smallest difference in the clearness, the facility, and the certainty, with which he knows them.

If all the circumstances presented to the minds of his creatures, and constituting moral inducements to a certain line of conduct, are a part of the plan of the Almighty, it is in his power to accommodate these circumstances to the varieties which he perceives in the characters of mankind, so as to lead them certainly in the path which he chooses for them. We observe, in the history of the human race, what we call a national character, formed by that concurrence of natural and moral causes, which every sound theist ascribes to the providence of Him who is the Governor among the nations. We observe, in private life, how much the characters of those with whom we have intercourse depend upon their education, their society, their employments, and the events which befal *them*; and we can conceive these and other circumstances combined in the lot of an individual by the disposition of Heaven, so as to have a most commanding influence in eradicating from his breast the vices which were natural to him, and in calling forth the continued and vigorous exercise of every virtu-

ous principle. This influence is the meaning of an expression in theological books, *gratia congrua*, that is, grace exercised in congruity to the disposition of him who is the subject of it, accommodating circumstances to his character in that manner which the Almighty foresees will prove effectual for the purpose of leading him to faith and repentance. This is the account which some writers of the Church of Rome, of great eminence in their day, chose to give of the efficacy of divine grace: it was probably included in the expression used by Arminius, that the means of grace are administered *juxta sapientiam*; and it seems to have been adopted by the earliest followers of Arminius. The account of the efficacy of divine grace, which may be shortly expressed by the phrase *gratia congrua*, proceeds upon the view that has been given of the influence of motives; and to all who admit that the influence of motives upon the mind may certainly direct the conduct, this account cannot appear inconsistent with the principles of human nature. But it was rejected by the successors of Arminius, in their confessions of faith, as inconsistent with an intention to save all men, and as implying a precise and absolute intention of saving some, effectually carried into execution by the congruity of the grace which is administered unto them. It is rejected by the modern Arminians as inconsistent with what they call the self-determining power of the mind: and it is considered by the Calvinists as liable to objections, and as insufficient of itself to produce the effects ascribed to it. *Gratia congrua* appears to the Calvinists to imply an exercise of *scientia media*; because it implies that the minds of those who are to be saved, are considered as having an existence, and as possessing a determinate character, independently of the divine decree, and that the administration of the means of grace is directed by reference to that character. It appears to the Calvinists to be contradicted, as far as we can judge, by fact. For as the most favourable circumstances did not conduct the Jews, among whom our Saviour lived, to faith in the true Messiah, or preserve Judas, a member of his family, from the blackest guilt, while many among the heathen, without any preparation, were turned, at the first sound of the Gospel, from idols, to serve the living God; so, in every age, the concurrence of all the advantages, which

education and opportunities can afford, proves ineffectual in regard to some; while others, with the scantiest means of improvement, attain the character of those who shall be saved. *Gratia congrua* appears further to the Calvinists not to come up to the import of those expressions, by which the Scripture describes the operation of the grace of God upon the soul, nor to imply a remedy suited to that degree of corruption in human nature, which they think may be fairly inferred both from experience and from Scripture.

For all these reasons, the Calvinists consider the efficacy of divine grace as consisting in an immediate action of the Spirit of God upon the soul. This part of their doctrine may be easily represented in such a light, as if it were subversive of the nature of a moral agent; and much occasion has been given for such representations by the unguarded expressions of those who wish to magnify the divine power displayed in this action. But as it is of more importance to know how the doctrine may be stated in consistency with those fundamental principles which cannot be renounced, than how it has been misstated, I shall not dilate on the exaggerations either of its friends or of its adversaries, but simply present such a view of it as appears to me perfectly agreeable both to the words of our Confession of Faith, and to the account which has been given of the liberty of a moral agent.

It is manifest that the uncertainty in the operation of motives, which was formerly mentioned, arises from the corruption of human nature; in other words, from the defects of the understanding and the disorders of the heart. If the understanding always perceived things as they are, and if the affections were so balanced in the soul, as never to dictate any choice in opposition to that which appears to be best, there would be an uniformity in the purposes and the conduct of all to whom the same motives are presented. But if, according to the descriptions which the Calvinists find in Scripture, and which they adopt as the foundation of their system, the corruption of human nature be such as to blind the understanding, and to give inferior appetites that dominion in the soul which was originally assigned to reason and conscience, all the multiplicity of error, and all the caprice of ungoverned desire, come in to give a variety and uncertainty to the choice of

the mind. The only method of removing this uncertainty of choice is by removing the corruption from which it proceeds. And this is allowed, by all who hold that there is such a corruption, to be the work, not of the creature who is corrupt, but of the Creator. This work is expressed in Scripture by such phrases as the following: "A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you."*—"Ye must be born again;"†—"renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created you;"‡—"renewed in the spirit of your minds—created unto good works."§ While the Calvinists infer from these expressions, that there is an immediate action of God upon the souls of those who are saved, they observe, that all these expressions are so very far from implying any action subversive of the nature of man, that they distinctly mark the restoration of the understanding, the affections, and all the principles of the human mind, to the state in which they were, before they were corrupted. Although the Calvinists do not attempt to explain the manner of this action, they say it cannot appear strange to any sound theist,—to any one who believes in God as the Father of spirits, that he has it in his power to restore to their original integrity those faculties which he at first bestowed, and which are continually preserved in exercise by his visitation: and they place that efficacy of divine grace which is characteristical of their system in this renovation of the mind, conjoined with the exhibition of such moral inducements, as are fitted to call forth the exertions of a mind acting according to reason. It appears to them indispensably necessary that these two, the renovation of the mind and the exhibition of moral inducements, should go together. For although it is of the nature of mind to be called forth to action by motives, yet the strongest motives may be presented in vain to a mind which is vitiated, and moral suasion may be insufficient to correct its heedlessness and to overcome its depravity; so that if the grace of God consisted merely in the exhibition of motives, or in a counsel of the same kind with that which a friend administers, it might be exerted without effect,

* Ezek. xxxvi. 26. † John iii. 7.
‡ Col. iii. 10. § Eph. iv. 23; ii. 10.

and those whom God intended to lead to salvation might remain under the power of sin. But when, to the exhibition of the strongest motives, is joined that influence which, by renewing the faculties of the mind, disposes it to attend to them, the effect, according to the laws by which mind operates, is infallible: and the Being who is capable of exerting that influence, and who, in the decree which embraces the whole system of the universe, arranged all the moral inducements that are to be exhibited in succession to his reasonable creatures, has entire dominion over their wills, and conducts them, agreeably to the laws of their nature, freely, *i. e.* with their consent and choice, and without the feeling of constraint, yet certainly, to the end which he proposes. This grace is irresistible, because all the principles which oppose its operation are subdued, and the will is inclined to follow the judgment of the understanding. What before was *arbitrium servum*, according to a language formerly used upon this subject, becomes *arbitrium liberum*; for the soul is rescued from a condition in which it was hurried on by appetite to act without due deliberation upon false views of objects, and it recovers the faculty of discerning, and the faculty of obeying the truth. But in the exercise of these faculties consists what the Scriptures call "the glorious liberty of the children of God," the liberty of a moral agent. He is a slave, the servant of sin, led captive by his lusts, when the derangement of his nature prevents him from seeing things as they are, from pursuing what deserves his choice, from avoiding what he ought to shun. He is free, when he deliberates, and judges, and acts according to the laws of his nature. By this freedom he is assimilated to higher orders of being, who uniformly choose what is good. God acts always according to the highest reason; he cannot but be just and good: yet in this moral necessity, which is inseparable from the idea of a perfect being, there is freedom of choice. The man Christ Jesus was uniformly and infallibly determined to do those things which pleased his Father; yet he acted with the most entire freedom. "The spirits of just men made perfect" are unalterably disposed to fulfil the commandments of the Most High; yet none will suppose that, when they are advanced to the perfection of their nature, they have lost what is

essential to the character of a moral agent. So to man in a state of trial, according to the degree in which his will is determined by the grace of God to the choice of what is good, to the same degree is the freedom of his nature restored. If the corruption of his nature, which indisposes him for that choice, were completely removed, he would always will and do what is good. If some remainders of that corruption are allowed to continue, there will be a proportional danger of his deviating from the right path. But the degree may be so small, that he shall be effectually preserved from being at any time under the bondage of sin, and in the general course of his life shall be determined by those motives which the Gospel exhibits.

These are the principles upon which the Calvinists are best able to defend their system against the objection, that it is subversive of the nature of man. They hold, that in the exercise of that faith and repentance which are indispensably necessary to salvation, the determination to act arises from the influence of God upon the soul; but that it is a determination to act according to the nature of the soul, and therefore, that although the effect of the determination is certain, the action continues to be free. The Arminians themselves allow that contingent events, such as the volitions and exertions of free agents, are certain beforehand; for they admit that the foreknowledge of God extends to them. It is not, therefore, the bare certainty of the event which can appear to them inconsistent with liberty: and if the cause to which the Calvinists ascribe this certainty gives to the mind the full possession and exercise of its faculties, there is implied in the certainty of the event, not the destruction, but the improvement of the liberty of man.

SECTION IV.

The second head, to which all the difficulties that have been supposed to adhere to the Calvinistic system may be reduced, is this: It is conceived to be dishonourable to

God, and inconsistent with those attributes of his nature, of which we are able to form the clearest notions. The amount of the difficulties, which belong to this second head, may be thus shortly stated.

Allowing that the determining grace of God may, without destroying the nature of man, effectually lead to eternal life those to whom it is given, yet the bestowing such a favour upon some and not upon others, when all stood equally in need of it, constitutes a distinction amongst the creatures of God, which it appears impossible to reconcile with the impartiality of their common Father. It is true that many of his children receive a smaller portion in this life than others: but the unequal distribution of earthly comforts is subservient to the welfare of society, and calls forth the exercise of many virtues; for while those who receive much have opportunities of doing good, those who receive little are placed in a situation which is often very favourable to their moral character; and all are encouraged to look forward to a time, when the present inequalities shall be removed. But the withholding from some that grace, which is supposed to be essential to the formation of their moral character, can never be compensated. It leaves them sinful and wretched here, and consigns them to the abodes of misery hereafter; whilst others, not originally superior to them, are conducted, by the grace with which they are distinguished, through the practice of virtue upon earth, to its highest rewards in heaven. The Almighty appears, according to this system, not only partial, but also chargeable with all the sin that remains in the world, by withholding the grace which would have removed it; he appears unjust in punishing those transgressions which he does not furnish men with effectual means of avoiding; and there seems to be a want of sincerity in the various expressions of his earnest desire that men should abstain from sin, in the reproaches for their not abstaining from it, and in the expostulations upon account of their obstinacy, with which the Scriptures abound, when he had determined beforehand to withhold from many that grace which he might have bestowed upon all, and without which he knows that every man must continue in sin.

The picture which I have drawn easily admits of very

high colouring, such as may be found in Whitby's Discourses on the Five Points. Even in the simple exhibition of it now given, it appears to contain objections and difficulties of a very serious nature: and if these objections and difficulties fairly result from the Calvinistic system, if they are peculiar to that system, and if they do not admit of an answer, they are a clear proof that it does not contain a true representation of the extent and the application of the remedy. For it is impossible that any doctrine, inconsistent with the attributes of God, is contained in a divine revelation. But we may find, upon an attentive examination of the picture now drawn, that for the solution of some of the difficulties nothing more is necessary than a fair statement of the case; that some belong to the Arminian system no less than to the Calvinistic; and that others are to be placed to the account of the narrowness of our understandings, which, in following out principles that appear unquestionably true, meet upon all subjects with points which they are unable to explain.

When the Calvinists are accused of charging God with partiality, because they say that the effectual determining grace, which is imparted to some and not to others, proceeds from the mere good pleasure of God, they pretend to give no other answer than this, that the Almighty is not accountable to any for the manner in which he dispenses his favours; and that, although the favour conferred upon the elect is infinitely superior to all the bounties of Providence, a favour which fixes their moral character and their everlasting condition, still it is a favour which originates entirely in the good pleasure of Him by whom it is bestowed, and in the communication of which there is no room for the rules of distributive justice, but it is lawful for the Creator to do what he will with his own. Justice is exercised, after men have acted their parts, in giving to every one according to his deserts; and then all respect of persons, any kind of preference, which is not founded upon the superior worthiness of the objects preferred, is repugnant to our moral feelings, and inconsistent with our conceptions of the Supreme Ruler. But the case is widely different with regard to the communication of that effectual grace, which is the fruit of election. For according to the view of the divine fore-

knowledge, which is essential to the Calvinistic system, all things are brought into being by the execution of the divine decree, so that no circumstance in the manner of the existence of any individual can depend upon the conduct of that individual, but all that distinguishes him from others must originate in the mind which formed the decree: and according to the view of the moral condition of the posterity of Adam, upon which the Calvinistic system proceeds, all deserved to suffer, so that the grace, by which any are saved from suffering, is to be ascribed to the compassion of the Almighty, *i. e.* to an exercise of goodness, which it is impossible for any to claim as a right.

But the Arminians do not rest in accusing the Calvinists of charging God with partiality: they represent absolute reprobation as imposing upon men a necessity of sinning, from whence it follows that there is not only an unequal distribution of favours according to the Calvinistic system, but that there is also gross injustice, in punishing any sins which are committed. All Arminian books are filled with references to human life, with similes, and with repetitions of the same argument in various forms, by which it is intended to impress upon the minds of their readers this idea, that as we cannot, without glaring iniquity, first take away from man the power of obeying a command, and then punish his disobedience, so if we adhere to those clear notions of the moral character of the Deity which reason and Scripture teach, we must renounce a system, which implies that men suffer everlasting misery for those sins which God made it impossible for them to avoid. To this kind of reasoning the Calvinists answer, that, under all the amplification which it has often received, there is concealed a fallacy in the statement which totally enervates the objection; and the alleged fallacy is thus explained by them. If the decree of reprobation implied any influence exerted by God upon the mind leading men to sin, the consequences charged upon it would clearly follow. But that decree is nothing more than the withholding from some the grace which is imparted to others; and God concurs in the sins committed by those from whom the grace is withheld, only by that general concurrence which is necessary to the preser-

vation of his creatures. He, in whom they "live and move and have their being," continues with them the exercise of their powers: but the particular direction of that exercise, which renders their actions sinful, arises from the perverseness of their own will, and is the fruit of their own deliberation. They feel that they might have acted otherwise: they blame themselves, because when it was in their power to have avoided sin they did not avoid it; and thus they carry about with them, in the sentiments and the reproaches of their own minds, a decisive proof, which sophistry can never overpower, that there was no external cause compelling them to sin. It is admitted by the Calvinists, that all from whom the special grace of God is withheld, shall infallibly continue under the dominion of sin, because their doctrine with regard to the grace of God proceeds upon that corruption of human nature, which this grace alone is able to remove. But they hold that, although of two events one is certainly future, both may be equally possible in this sense, that neither implies a contradiction: and this is all that appears to them necessary to vindicate their doctrine from the charge of implying that men are compelled to sin. The Arminians are not entitled to require more, because, by admitting that the sins of men are foreknown by God, they admit that they are certain, and yet they do not consider this certainty of the event as infringing on the liberty of those by whose agency the event is accomplished. When it is said, then, that man, by the decree of reprobation, is put under a necessity of sinning, there is an equivocation in the expression. Those who wish to fix a reproach upon the Calvinistic system mean, by a necessity of sinning, that co-action, that foreign impulse, which destroys liberty: those who defend this system admit of a necessity of sinning, in no other sense than as that expression may be employed to denote merely the certainty of sinning which arises from the state of the mind; and they have recourse to a distinction, formerly explained, between that physical necessity of sinning, which frees from all blame, and that moral necessity of sinning, which implies the highest degree of blame. This distinction is supported by the sentiments of human nature; it is the foundation of judgments, which we are accustomed daily to pro-

nounce, with regard to the conduct of our neighbours; and, when rightly understood and applied, it removes from the Calvinistic doctrine the odious imputation of representing men as punished by God for what he compels them to do.

Still, however, a cloud hangs over the subject; and there is a difficulty in reconciling the mind to a system, which, after laying this foundation, that special grace is necessary to the production of human virtue, adopts as its distinguishing tenet this position, that that grace is denied to many. The objection may be inaccurately stated by the adversaries of the system: there may be exaggeration and much false colouring in what they say: it may be true that God is not the promoter or instigator of sin; that the evil propensities of our nature, with which we ourselves are chargeable, lead us astray, and that every person who follows these propensities, in opposition to the dictates of reason and conscience, deserves to suffer. But, after all, it must be admitted, upon the Calvinistic system, that God might have prevented this deviation and this suffering; that as no dire necessity restrains the Almighty from communicating any measure of grace to any number of his creatures, the unmerited favour which is shown to some might have been shown to others also; and therefore, that all the variety of transgression, and the consequent misery of his creatures, may be traced back to his unequal distribution of that grace which he was not bound to impart to any, but which, although he might have imparted it to all, he chose to give only to some.

This appears to me the fair amount of the objection against the Calvinistic system, drawn from its apparent inconsistency with some of the moral attributes of the Deity. The objection is stated in terms more moderate than are commonly to be found in Arminian books; but it is in reality the stronger for not being exaggerated.

When this objection is calmly examined, without a predilection for any particular system of theology, it will be found resolvable into that question, which has exercised the mind of man ever since he began to speculate, how was moral evil introduced, and how is it permitted to exist under the government of a Being whose wisdom, and power, and goodness, are without bounds? The exist-

ence of moral evil is a fact independent of all the systems of philosophy or theology which are employed to account for it. It has been the complaint of all ages, that many of the rational creatures of God abuse the freedom which is essential to their character as moral and accountable agents, debase their nature, and pursue a line of conduct which is destructive of their own happiness and hurtful to their neighbour. And it is agreeable to both reason and Scripture to believe that the depravity and misery, which are beheld upon earth, are the introduction to a state of more complete degradation and more unabated wretchedness hereafter. And thus, as it is no objection to the truth of the Gospel, that there is moral evil in the world, because it existed before the Gospel was given, so the difficulty of accounting for its existence is not to be charged to the account of any particular system of theology, because its existence is the great problem, to the solution of which the faculties of man have ever been unequal. Although, notwithstanding that difficulty, the proofs of the being, the perfections, and the government of God, appear, to those who understand the principles of natural religion, sufficient to remove every reasonable doubt, the difficulty still remains; and a sound theist believes that God is good, without being able to explain why there is evil in a world which he created.

A short review of the attempts that were made, in ancient times, to solve this problem may prepare you for understanding the force of the answer, given by the Calvinists to that objection against their system which we are now considering.

Some philosophers, who held the pre-existence of souls, said that man in this state expiates by suffering the sins, which he committed in a former state, and recovers, by a gradual purification, the perfection of his nature which he had lost. But, besides that this was assuming as true a position of which there is no evidence, that man existed in a previous state, the position, supposing it to be true, is of none avail, because it merely shifts the difficulty from the state which we behold, to a previous state, which was equally under the government of God. It was the fundamental doctrine of the oriental philosophy, that there are two opposite principles in nature, the one good, the other

evil. The good principle is limited and counteracted in his desire to communicate happiness by the evil principle; and, from the opposition between the two, there arises not such a world as the good would have produced, but a world in which virtue and vice, happiness and misery, are blended together. But as the good principle is more powerful than the evil, he will at length prevail; so that the final result of the present strife will be the defeat of the evil principle, and the undisturbed felicity of those that have been virtuous.

All the sects of Gnostics, which distracted the early ages of the Christian church, adopted some modification of this doctrine, and were distinguished from one another only by the rank which they assigned to the evil spirit, by the manner in which they traced his generation, or the period which they assigned to his fall.* The fame of Manes eclipsed all the other founders of the Gnostic sects; and his doctrine, which was once diffused over a great part of the Christian world, is still familiar to every scholar, under the name of Manicheism. Manes made the evil principle, which he called ὑλη, *matter*, co-eternal with the Supreme Being. To the power of this principle, independent of God, and acting in opposition to him, Manes ascribed all the evil that now is, and that will for ever continue to exist in the world. He considered the sins of men as proceeding from the suggestions and impulse of this spirit; and the corruption of human nature as consisting in this, that besides the rational soul, which is an emanation from the Supreme Being who is light, the body is inhabited and actuated by a depraved mind which originates from the evil principle, and retains the character of its author. This was the system by which Manes, treading in the steps of many who went before him, and studying to improve upon their defects, attempted to account for the existence of moral evil. But as this sys-

* Mosheim's Church History, vol. i. The learned author has, with much erudition, discriminated the different sects. But he has entered more minutely into this discrimination than is consistent with the patience of his readers, or than can serve any good purpose. For it is a matter of very little importance in what manner writers, whose names are deservedly forgotten, arranged the rank and the subordination of those beings to whom their imagination gave existence.

tem, in order to preserve the honour of the moral attributes of the Deity, admits such limitations of his power as are inconsistent with the independence and sovereignty of the Lord of nature, it must be renounced by all who entertain those exalted conceptions of the divine majesty which are agreeable to reason, and illustrated by Scripture, or who pay due attention to the revelation given in Scripture, of those evil spirits who oppose the purposes of divine Grace. We believe that the Almighty was before all things; that every thing which is, derived its existence, its form, and its powers from his will; that his counsels are independent of every other being; that the strength of his creatures, all of whom are his servants, cannot for a moment counteract the working of his arm, and that the world is what he willed it to be. We learn from Scripture that there are higher orders of being, not the objects of our senses, who are the creatures of God, and of whom an innumerable company run to fulfil his pleasure. We learn that some of these beings, by disobeying their Creator, forfeited the state in which he first placed them; that their depravity is accompanied with a desire to corrupt others; that one of them was the tempter of our first parents, and that he still continues to exert an influence over the minds of their posterity, by enticing them to sin. But the Scriptures guard us against supposing that this evil spirit is rendered by his apostacy independent of the Supreme Being. For by many striking expressions in the ancient books, and by the whole series of facts and declarations in the New Testament, we are led to consider him as entirely under the command and control of the Creator, permitted to exert a certain degree of influence for a season, but restrained and counteracted during that season, by a power infinitely superior to his own, till the time arrive when he is to be bound in everlasting chains, and his works destroyed.

It appears, then, that the account of the origin of evil, which is characteristical of the Manichean system, does not receive any degree of countenance from that revelation of the invisible world which the Scriptures give. There is indeed mentioned in various parts of Scripture incidentally and with much obscurity, a connexion between us and other parts of the universe,—an influence exerted over the human race by beings far removed from

our observation, who are the creatures and the subjects of Him who made us. The spirits who stand before the Almighty are sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation; and the spirits who rebelled against him seek to involve us in the guilt and the misery of their rebellion. This incidental opening suggests to our minds a conception of the unity of the great moral system, of the mutual subserviency of its parts, and of the multiplicity of those relations by which the parts are bound together; a conception somewhat analogous to those ideas of reciprocal action in the immense bodies of the natural system, upon which the received principles of astronomy proceed, and which the progress of modern discoveries has very much confirmed. Our faculties are not adequate to the full comprehension of such connexions, either in the natural or in the moral world. But the hints which are given may teach us humility, by showing how much remains to be known; they may enlarge and elevate our ideas of the magnificence and order of the work of God; and they conspire in imprinting on our minds this first lesson of religion, that every part of that work is his, that the superintendence and control of the Supreme Mind extends throughout the whole, and that we give a false account of every phenomenon either in the natural or in the moral world, when we withdraw it from the all-ruling providence of Him, without whose permission nothing can be, and whose energy pervades all the exertions of his creatures.

If we say that moral evil exists in the world, because, by the constitution under which we live, the effects of the disobedience of our first parents are transmitted to their posterity, we explain, agreeably to the information afforded in Scripture, the manner in which sin was introduced, but we do not account for its introduction; for that constitution to which we ascribe its continuance in the world, was established by God; and after we have been made to ascend this step, we are left just where we were, to inquire why the Almighty not only permitted moral evil to enter, but established a constitution by which it is propagated. If we attempt, as has often been done, to account for moral evil by the necessary limitation in the capacities of all created beings, we are in danger of returning to the principles of the Gnostics, who ascribed an essential pravity to

matter, which not even the power of the Almighty can subdue. If we say that moral evil is subservient to the good of the universe, we seem to be warranted by many analogies in the structure and operations of our own frame, where pain is a preparative for pleasure,—in the appearances of the earth, and the vicissitudes to which it is subject, where irregularity and deformity contribute to the beauty and preservation of the whole,—in society, where permanent and universal good often arises out of partial and temporary evil. Such analogies have often been observed, and they constitute both a delightful and a useful part of natural history;* but when we attempt to apply them to the system of the universe, as an account of that evil which has been, and which always will be, which affects the character as well as the happiness of rational agents, and excludes them from the hope of recovering that rank which they had lost, we find that we have got beyond our depth. The idea may be just, but we are bewildered in the inferences which we presume to draw from it; although we perceive numberless instances in which partial good arises out of partial evil, yet we are unable to explain what is the subserviency to good in the whole system of that evil which is permanent; and after being pressed with difficulties on every side, we are obliged to confess our ignorance of the extent and the relations of the great subject concerning which we speculate.

Having seen the insufficiency of the various attempts made in ancient and modern times, to solve the great problem of natural religion, it only remains for us to rest in those fundamental principles of which we have sufficient evidence. We know that God is wise and good, and that as nothing in the universe has power to defeat or counteract his purposes, all things that are, entered into the great plan which he formed from the beginning. Hence we infer that the universe, understanding by that word the whole series of causes and effects, and the whole succession of created beings, is, such as we behold it, the work of God. Why it is not more perfect we know not. But from the single fact that it is, we infer that it answers the purposes of the Creator. He did not choose it on ac-

* Paley's Natural Theology. Goodness of the Deity.

count of its imperfections: but these imperfections were not hidden from his view, nor are they independent of his will; and he chose it out of all the possible worlds which he might have made, because, with all its imperfections, it promotes the end for which it was made. That end, being such as God proposed, must be good; and the world, being the fittest to promote that end, must, notwithstanding its imperfections, be such as it was worthy of God to produce.

It does not appear to me that human reason can go farther upon this subject. I am sensible that this is a method of accounting for the existence of evil, not very flattering to the pride of our understandings, and not much fitted to afford a solution of those difficulties which exercise our curiosity. It is deducing a vindication of what is done, not from our reasonings and views, but from the fact that it is done. But to this kind of vindication we are obliged perpetually to have recourse in all parts both of natural and of revealed religion; and to those who consider it unsatisfying I can give no better counsel than to read and ponder Bishop Butler's Analogy, which, of all the books that ever were written by men, is the best calculated to check the extravagance of our shallow speculations concerning the government of God.

When I stated the objection to the Calvinistic system, that it is inconsistent with the goodness of God, the objection appeared to be resolvable into the question concerning the origin of evil; and now that we have attained the philosophical answer to that question, we find ourselves brought back to the principles of Calvinism. It was objected to the Calvinistic system that if God withholds from some the special grace which would have led them to repentance, their sin and misery may be traced back to him. But we have seen that all the moral evil in the world may in like manner be traced back to God, because the great plan, of which that moral evil is a part, originated from his counsel; so that the answer to this objection against Calvinism is precisely the same with the philosophical answer to the question concerning moral evil. It is seen that some do not repent and believe: but their conduct, like every other event in the universe, was comprehended in the divine plan; in other words, because God has not

conferred upon them that grace which would have led them to pursue a different conduct, we infer that it was not his original purpose to confer that grace, and we believe that the purpose is good because it is his.

The Arminians are compelled to have recourse to the very same answer, although they attempt, by their system, to shift it for a little. They say that men do not repent and believe, because they resist that grace which might have led them to repentance and faith. But why do they resist this grace? The Arminians answer, that the resistance arises from the self-determining power of the mind. But why does one mind determine itself to submit to this grace and another to resist it? If the Arminians exclude the infallible operation of every foreign cause, they must answer this question by ascribing the difference to the different character of the minds; and then one question more brings them to God, the Father of spirits. For if these different characters of mind be supposed to have existed independently of the divine will, a sufficient account is indeed given why some are predestinated and others are reprobated; but it is an account which withdraws the everlasting condition of his reasonable offspring from the disposal of the Supreme Being: whereas if it be admitted that he who made them gave to their minds the qualities by which they are distinguished, and ordained all the circumstances of their lot which conspire in forming their moral character, the resistance given by some is referred to his appointment. It appears to be an incontrovertible truth, a truth the evidence of which is implied in the terms in which it is enunciated, that the gifts of nature and the gifts of grace proceed equally from the good pleasure of him who bestows them: and if this fundamental proposition be granted, then the Calvinistic and Arminian systems lead ultimately to the same conclusion. The Arminians ascribe the faith and good works of some to a predisposition in their own minds for receiving the means which God has provided for all, and to the favourable circumstances which cherish this disposition; and the impenitence and unbelief of others to the obstinacy of their hearts, and to a concurrence of circumstances by which that obstinacy is prevented from yielding to the means of improvement. The Calvinists ascribe the faith

and good works of some to an immediate and supernatural operation of the Spirit of God upon their souls, by which the means of improvement are rendered effectual; and the impenitence and unbelief of others to that withholding of the grace of God, by which the most favourable situation becomes ineffectual for leading them to eternal life. In either case that God, who forms the heart and who orders the lot of all his creatures, executes his purpose; and although the steps be somewhat different in the two systems, yet, according to both, the *ultima ratio*, the true reason why some are saved and others are not, is the good pleasure of Him who, by a different dispensation of the gifts of nature and of grace, might have saved all.

What the ends are which God proposed to himself, by saving some instead of saving all, we are totally unqualified to explain. Agreeably to the expression used in our Confession of Faith,* the Calvinists are accustomed to say that the great end of the whole system is the glory of God, or the illustration of his attributes; that as he displayed his mercy by saving some from that guilt and misery in which all were involved, so he displays his justice by punishing others for that sin, in which, according to his sovereign pleasure, he chose to leave them. Arminian writers are accustomed to reprobate, with much indignation, an expression which appears to them to represent the glory of God as a separate end, pursued by him for his own pleasure, without any consideration of the happiness of his creatures, or any attention to their ideas of justice. But, bearing in mind the whole character of the Deity, considering that He, who may do what he will, being infinitely wise and good, can do nothing but what is right, it is obvious that his glory is inseparably connected with the happiness of his creatures. What the weakness of our understanding leads us to call different parts of a character, are united with the most indissoluble harmony in the divine mind; and his works, which illustrate his attributes, do not display any one of them in such a manner as to obscure the rest. From this perfect harmony between the wisdom and goodness of God, his creatures may rest assured, that every circumstance which

* Confession of Faith, iii. 3.

concerns their welfare is effectually provided for in that system which he chose to produce; and the whole universe of created intelligence could have chosen nothing for themselves so good, as that which is ordained to be, because it illustrates the glory of the Creator. At the same time, it must be acknowledged, that we do not make any advances in our acquaintance with the ends of the system by adopting this expression. The expression implies, that there is a balance or proportion among the different attributes, that the display of one is bounded by the display of another, and that there are certain limits of every particular attribute implied in the perfection of the divine mind. But it leaves us completely ignorant of the nature of those limits, and it does not presume to explain why the justice of God required the condemnation of that precise number who are left to perish, and how his mercy was fully displayed in the salvation of that precise number who are called the elect. We are still left to resolve the discrimination which was made, and the extent of that discrimination, into the good pleasure of God; by which phrase is meant, not the will of a being acting capriciously for his own gratification, but a will determined by the best reasons, although these reasons are beyond our comprehension: and all doubts and objections, which the narrowness of our views might suggest, are lost in that entire confidence, with which the magnificence of his works and the principles of our nature teach us to look up to a Being, of whom, and by whom, and to whom are all things.

It may be thought, upon a superficial view, that the account which has been given of the origin of evil, represents sin as not less agreeable to the Almighty than virtue, since both enter into the plan which he ordained, and both are considered as the fulfilment of his purpose. This specious and popular objection has often been urged with an air of triumph against the Calvinistic system. But the principles which have been stated furnish an answer to the objection. The evil that is in the universe was not chosen by God upon its own account, but was permitted upon account of its connexion with that good which he chooses. The precise notion of God's permitting evil is this, that his power is not exerted in hindering that from coming into existence, which could not have existed inde-

pendently of his will, and which is allowed to exist, because, although not in itself an object of his approbation, it results from something else. According to this notion of the permission of evil, we say that although this world, notwithstanding the evil that is in it, promotes the end which the Creator proposed, and carries into effect the purpose which he had in creating it, yet he beholds the good that is in the world with approbation, and the evil with abhorrence. We gather from all the conceptions which we are led to form of the Supreme Being that he cannot love evil: we feel that he has so constituted our minds, that we always behold moral evil with indignation in others, with self-reproach in ourselves: we often observe, we sometimes experience the fatal effects which it produces; and we find all the parts of that revelation which the Scriptures contain, conspiring to dissuade us from the practice of it. In this entire coincidence between the deductions of reason, the sentiments of human nature, the influence of conduct upon happiness, and the declarations of the divine word, there is laid such a foundation of morality as no speculations can shake. This coincidence gives that direct and authoritative intimation of the will of our Creator, which was plainly intended to be the rule of our actions: and the assurance of the moral character of his government, which we derive from these sources, is so forcibly conveyed to our understandings and our hearts, that if our reasonings upon theological subjects should ever appear to give the colour of truth to any views that are opposite to this assurance, we may, without hesitation, conclude that these views are false. They have derived their colour of truth from our presuming to carry our researches farther than the limited range of our faculties admits, and from our mistaking those difficulties which are unaccountable to an intelligence so finite as ours, for those contradictions which indicate to every intelligent being the falsehood of the proposition to which they adhere.

These are the general principles, upon which the ablest defenders of the Calvinistic system attempt to vindicate that system from the charge of being inconsistent with the nature of man and the nature of God. As they furnish the answer to philosophical objections, I have stated them, as much as possible, in a philosophical form, with very

little reference to the authority of Scripture, and without the use of those technical terms which occur in the books of Theology. But it is not proper for us to rest in this form. To afford a complete view of the evidence and of the application of these principles, I mean first to present a comprehensive account of that support which the Calvinistic system derives from Scripture:—secondly, to give a general history of Calvinism, of the reception which at different periods it has met with in the Christian church, and of what may be called its present state:—and then to conclude the subject by applying the principles which have been stated as an answer to the two objections, in a concise discussion of various questions that have agitated the Christian church, and in an explication of various phrases that have been currently used in treating of these questions. The questions turn upon general principles, so that although they have been spread out in great detail, and although they seem to belong to different subjects, all that is necessary in discussing them is to show the manner in which the general principles apply to the particular questions. The general principles will be elucidated by this various application; and we shall be able, after having travelled quickly over much debatable matter, to mark the consistency with which all the parts of the Calvinistic system arise out of a few leading ideas.

Reid on the Active Powers.
King on the Origin of Evil.
Clarke's Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God.
Whitby on the Five Points.
Locke.
Edwards on Free Will.
Butler's Analogy.

CHAP. X.

GENERAL VIEW OF THE SUPPORT WHICH SCRIPTURE GIVES TO THE CALVINISTIC SYSTEM.

THE passages adduced from Scripture by the friends and the adversaries of this system are so numerous, and have received interpretations so widely different, that I should engage in an endless field of controversy, if I attempted to notice particular texts, and to contrast in every instance the Arminian and the Calvinistic exposition of them. But a labour so tedious and fatiguing is really unnecessary, for the same principles, upon which the Calvinistic exposition of one passage proceeds, apply to every other. Instead, therefore, of repeating the same leading ideas with a small variation of form, I shall simply mention that an index of particular texts may be found in the proofs annexed to several chapters of the Confession of Faith, in the quotations that are made in every ordinary system under the several heads which belong to the doctrine of predestination, and in those books which should be read upon the subject. And I shall endeavour to arrange this multifarious matter under the three following heads, which appear to me to constitute the support which Scripture gives to the Calvinistic system. 1. All the actions of men, even those which the Scripture holds forth to our abhorrence, are represented as being comprehended in the great plan of divine providence. 2. The predestination of which the Scripture speaks is ascribed to the good pleasure of God. 3. And the various descriptions of that change of character, by which men are prepared for eternal life, seem intended to magnify the power, and to declare the efficacy of that grace by which it is produced. I shall then state

the answers given by the Calvinists to that objection against their system which has been drawn from the commands, the counsels, and the expostulations of Scripture.

SECTION I.

All the actions of men, even those which the Scripture holds forth to our abhorrence, are represented as being comprehended in the great plan of divine providence. I do not mean merely that all the actions of men are foreseen by God. Of this the predictions in Scripture afford evidence which even the Arminians admit to be incontrovertible. But I mean that the actions of men are foreseen by God, not as events independent of his will, but as originating in his determination, and as fulfilling his purpose. By many sublime expressions the Scriptures impress our minds with an idea of the universal sovereignty of God, of the extent and efficacy of his counsel, and of the uncontrolled operation of his power throughout all his dominions. Even those beings and events, that appear to counteract his designs, are represented as subject to his will, as not only at length to be subdued by him, but as promoting, while they operate, the end for which he ordained them.—Psal. lxxvi. 10.—Prov. xvi. 4.—Is. xlv. 7.—Lam. iii. 37, 38. Such expressions receive a striking illustration from many of the histories recorded in Scripture. The barbarity of the brethren of Joseph, which filled their minds with deep remorse, was intended by God as an instrument of providing a settlement for the posterity of Abraham. "As for you," said Joseph to his brethren, Gen. l. 20, "ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive." God did not merely turn it to good after it happened, but he "meant it unto good." The obstinacy of Pharaoh, in refusing to let the people go out of that country to which the wickedness of the sons of Jacob had led them, was, in like manner, a part of the plan of divine providence; for,

as God said unto Moses, Exod. x. 1, 2, "I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants, that I might show these my signs before him; and that thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy son's son, what things I have wrought in Egypt." "I have hardened his heart," not by exerting any immediate influence leading him to sin, but by disposing matters in such a manner that he shall not consent: he shall suffer for his obstinacy; but that obstinacy is appointed by me to give an opportunity of exhibiting those signs which shall transmit the law of Moses to future ages with unquestionable proofs of its divine original. The folly of the princes, whose territories adjoined to the wilderness, in refusing the children of Israel a free passage when they went out of Egypt, the combination of the kings of Canaan, which brought destruction upon themselves, and the oppression and ravages of those who carried Israel into captivity, are all held forth in the historical and prophetical books of Scripture, as proceeding from the ordination of God. Of Cyrus the good prince, whose edict recalled the Jews from captivity, the Almighty says, Is. xliv. xlv. "He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure, even saying to Jerusalem, thou shalt be built; mine anointed, whose right hand I have holden; whom, for Jacob my servant's sake, I have called by his name." But of Nebuchadnezzar also, the destroyer of nations, whose pride is painted in the strongest colours, and whose punishment corresponded to the enormity of his crimes, thus saith the Almighty, Jer. xxvii. 4—8, "I have made the earth, and have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto me: and now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon my servant." And again, Ezek. xxx. 24, 25, "I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, and put my sword in his hand,—and he shall stretch it out upon the land of Egypt."

The infidelity of the Jews who lived in our Saviour's time, the envy and malice of their rulers, and the injustice and violence with which an innocent man was condemned to die, were crimes in themselves most atrocious, and are declared in Scripture to have been the cause of that unexampled misery which the Jewish nation suffered. Yet all this is also declared, Acts ii. 23, to have happened, "by

the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." And Acts iv. 27, "Both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." And Peter, after relating the manner in which our Lord was put to death, adds the following words, Acts iii. 18: "Those things which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled;" *i. e.* the purpose of God in delivering the world embraced all the wicked actions of the persecutors of his Son; and could not have been accomplished in the manner which he had foretold without these actions. Hence it came to be necessary that these actions should be performed: and this necessity is intimated, as in many other places of Scripture, so particularly Matth. xvi. 21. "Jesus began to show unto his disciples how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed and be raised again the third day." In the original, the same verb δει governs the infinitives απελθειν, παθειν, αποκταυθηναι, εγερθηναι; *i. e.* the form of the expression represents his going to Jerusalem, which was an action depending upon his own will, and his suffering many things of the chief priests, which depended upon their will, as being as unalterably fixed, and as having the same necessity of event as his resurrection from the dead, which was accomplished by an exertion of divine power without the intervention of man.

This last example is more particular and more interesting to us than any of the former: but it is exactly of the same order with the rest; and all of them conspire in establishing the following positions:—that actions, contrary to the law of God, and to the principles of morality, may form part of that plan originally fixed and determined in the divine mind;—that these actions do not lose any of their moral turpitude by being so determined, but continue to be the actions of the moral agents by whom they are performed, for which they deserve blame and suffer punishment;—and that actions thus wicked and punishable are made the instrument of great good. When we find these positions true in many particular instances, and also agreeing with general expressions in Scripture, we

conclude by fair induction that they may hold true in the great system of the universe; and we seem to be warranted to say, not merely that the providence of God brings good out of evil when the evil happens;—that is allowed by the Socinians who deny the divine foreknowledge;—not merely that God, foreseeing wicked actions which were to be performed, connected them in the plan of his providence with the events which he had determined to produce;—this is what the Arminians say;—but that the Supreme Being, to whom the series of events, of good and of bad actions that constitute the character of this world, was from the beginning present, determined to produce this world; that the bad no less than the good actions result from his determination, and contribute to the prosperity of the whole; and yet that the liberty of moral agents not being in the least affected by this determination, they deserve praise or blame in the same manner as if their actions had not been predetermined. But these are some of the fundamental principles of Calvinism; and if the Scripture, both by general expressions, and by instances illustrating and exemplifying such expressions, gives its sanction to these principles, we have found a considerable support which the Calvinistic system derives from Scripture.

SECTION II.

The predestination, of which the Scripture speaks, is ascribed to the good pleasure of God.

There does not occur in the Greek Testament any substantive word equivalent to predestination. But the verb προορίζω, *prædestino*, is used in different places; πρόθεσις, ἐκλογή, ἐκλεκτοί, also occur;* and there does not appear to be any unwarrantable departure from the style of the New Testament in the language commonly used upon this subject. But it is not agreed, and it is not incontrovertibly clear, whether the sacred writers employed the words

* Ephes. i. Rom. ix. xi. 1 Pet. i. 1.

upon which this language has been framed, in the sense affixed to it by the Calvinists. There are two systems upon this point; and as these systems extend their influence to the interpretation of a great part of Scripture, it is proper to state distinctly the grounds upon which they rest.

The system by which all those, who do not hold the Calvinistic tenets, expound that predestination of which the Scripture speaks, is of the following kind. It appears from Scripture that God was pleased very early to make a discrimination amongst the children of Adam, as to the measure in which he imparted to them religious knowledge. The family of Abraham were selected, amidst abounding idolatry, to be the depositories of faith in one God, and of the hope of a Messiah; and they are presented to us in Scripture under the characters of the church, the peculiar people, the children of God. But the Old Testament contains many hints, which are fully unfolded in the New, of a purpose to extend the bounds of the church, and to admit men of all nations into that relation with the Supreme Being, which for many ages was the portion of the posterity of Abraham. This purpose, formed in the divine mind from the beginning, began to be executed when the apostles of Jesus went forth preaching the Gospel to every creature. It was a purpose so different from the prejudices in which they had been educated, and it appeared to their own minds so magnificent, so interesting and delightful, (after they were enabled to comprehend it,) that it occupies a considerable place in all their discourses and writings. It made a blessed change upon the moral and religious condition of the persons to whom these discourses and writings were generally addressed. For all former communications from heaven had been confined to the land of Judea; and the other nations of the earth, having been educated in idolatry, had no hereditary title to the privileges of the people of God. But the execution of that purpose declared in the Gospel placed them upon a level with the chosen race. Accordingly, Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, in many of his epistles, addresses the whole body of professing Christians to whom he writes, as elect, saints, predestinated to the adoption of children, and magnifies the purpose, or as he

often calls it, the mystery, which in other ages was not made known, but had been revealed to him, and was published to all, that τα εθνη, the Gentiles, who were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, were called to be fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of faith. Eph. iii. 3—7. By contrasting the enormity of the vices which had been habitual to them while they lived in idolatry, with the spiritual blessings, or the advantages for improving in virtue and attaining eternal life, which they enjoyed through the Gospel, he cherishes their thankfulness to God for his unmerited grace in pardoning their past transgressions, and he excites them to the practice of those virtues which became their new faith. When we employ this leading idea of all the epistles of Paul as a key to the meaning of particular passages, which are much quoted in support of the Calvinistic system, the predestination of which he speaks appears to be nothing more, than the purpose of placing the inhabitants of all countries, where the Gospel is preached, in the same favourable circumstances with respect to religion as the Jews were of old: the elect are the persons chosen out of the world, and called to the knowledge of the Gospel; and the spiritual blessings, which the apostle represents as common to all the members of the Christian societies whom he addresses, are the advantages flowing from that knowledge.

It is allowed that predestination, even in this sense, originates in the good pleasure of God. As he chose the posterity of Abraham, not because they were more mighty or more virtuous than other nations, but because he loved their fathers, so he dispenses to whomsoever he will the inestimable blessings connected with the publication of the Gospel. To nations who had been the most corrupt this saving light was sent; to individuals whose attainments did not seem to prepare them for this heavenly knowledge the Spirit revealed those "things that are freely given to us of God;" and our Lord has taught us, that instead of presuming to complain of that revelation, which the Almighty was not bound to give to any, having been sent to some parts of the world and not to others, it is our wisdom and our duty to acquiesce in the sovereignty of the divine administration, and to say with him, Matth. xi.

25, 26, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."

But although those, who admit of predestination only in this sense, acknowledge that it originates in the good pleasure of God, yet they do not consider this acknowledgment as giving any countenance to the Calvinistic system. They say that we are not warranted to record expressions, which originally marked a purpose of sending the blessings of the Gospel to all countries, as implying a purpose of confining eternal life to some individuals in all countries; and that although the Sovereign of the universe is accountable to none in dispensing the knowledge of the Gospel, any more than in dispensing the measures of skill, sagacity, or bodily strength, by which individuals are distinguished, because in the end he will render to all men according to their improvement of the advantages which they enjoy, yet it does not follow that it is consistent with the impartiality and universal beneficence of our Father in heaven to make such a distinction, in conferring inward grace, as shall certainly conduct some of his creatures to everlasting happiness, whilst others are left without remedy to perish in their sins.

The system of interpretation which I have now explained has been adopted and defended by very able men; by Whitby, the author of the commentary upon the New Testament; by Dr. Clarke, whose sermons discover more knowledge of Scripture than any other sermons that have been printed; and by Taylor of Norwich, author of a Key to the Epistle to the Romans, who, in a long introductory essay, has unfolded the ideas now stated, and made various use of them. The system is extremely plausible. It draws an interpretation of epistles, letters to different churches, from the known situation of these churches, and from the known ideas of the writer; and by considering particular passages in connexion with the scope of the epistle, it gives an explication of them, which, in general, is most rational and satisfying. The light, which every one who has lectured upon an epistle can communicate to the people by the application of this system, is so pleasing to himself, and so instructive to them, that he is apt to be confirmed in thinking it the full interpretation of the writer's meaning. And I have no difficulty in saying, that if the Calvinistic doctrine derived no other support from

Scripture than that which can fairly be drawn from out finding the words predestination, elect, and other similar words frequently recurring in the epistles, it might seem to an intelligent inquirer and a sound critic, that that doctrine had arisen rather by detaching particular texts from the contexts, and applying them in a sense which did not enter into the mind of the sacred writers, than by forming an enlarged comprehension of their views.

But after paying this just tribute to the system which I have explained, and after admitting that more stress is laid upon some particular texts, which are commonly quoted as Scripture authority for the Calvinistic doctrine, than they can well bear, I proceed to state fully the grounds of the other system of interpretation, according to which there is mention made in Scripture of a predestination of individuals arising from the mere good pleasure of God; and I entertain no doubt that the observations now to be made will appear sufficient to warrant the Calvinists in saying, that they do not pervert Scripture, when they pretend to find a general language, pervading many parts of it, which evidently favours their doctrine.

1. The former interpretation proceeded upon this ground, that the epistles are addressed to Christian societies, all the members of which enjoyed in common the advantages of the preaching of the Gospel, but all the members of which cannot be supposed to have been in the number of those who shall finally be saved; and hence it is inferred, that such expressions, as occur in the beginning of the Epistle to the Ephesians, mean nothing more than that change upon their condition, that external advantage common to the whole society, which God, in execution of the purpose formed by him from the beginning, had, through the publication of the Gospel, conferred upon all. Admitting that many of the persons addressed as saints and elect shall not finally be saved, still these words imply something more than a change upon the outward condition; and there is no necessity for our departing so far from their natural and obvious meaning, as to bring it down to mere external advantage, because the apostle was not warranted to make a distinction between those who are predestinated to life and those who are left to perish in their sins. This distinction is one of those secret things which belong to the Lord, and which he has not intrusted to his ministers.

They are bound in charity to believe, that all to whom the external blessings are imparted, and who appear to improve them with thankfulness, receive also that inward grace by which these blessings are made effectual to salvation; and they have no title to separate any persons from the society of the faithful, but those who have been guilty of open and flagrant transgressions. Such persons the apostle frequently marks out in his epistles; and he warns the Christians against holding intercourse with them; but to all who remained in the society he sends his benediction, and of all of them he hoped things that accompany salvation.

2. Although many passages in the epistles, which speak of predestination and of the elect, might seem to receive their full interpretation from the purpose of God to call other nations besides the Jews to the knowledge of the Gospel, yet there are places in the epistles of Paul which intimate that he had a further meaning. Of this kind is the ninth chapter to the Romans, and a part of the eleventh; two passages of Scripture which give the greatest trouble to those who deny the truth of the Calvinistic doctrine; which have received a long commentary from Arminius himself, and from many Arminian writers, but which, after all the attempts that have been made to accommodate them to their system, are fitted, in my opinion, to leave upon the mind of every candid reader an indelible impression that this system does not come up to the mind of the apostle. The ninth chapter to the Romans is one of the most difficult passages in Scripture; and I am far from saying that the Calvinistic system makes it plain. There is not only an obscurity but an extent in the subject which is beyond the reach of our faculties, and which represses our presumptuous attempts to penetrate the counsels of the Almighty. But after reading that chapter, and the eleventh, with due care in the original, the amount of them, it will probably be thought, may be thus stated. God chose the posterity of Abraham out of all the families of the earth. He made a distinction in the posterity of the patriarch, by confining to the seed of Isaac the blessings which he had promised; of the twin sons of Isaac, Esau and Jacob, he declared before they were born that he preferred the younger to

the elder, and rejecting Esau he transmitted the blessing through the children of Jacob. In all these limitations God exercised his sovereignty, and executed his own purpose according to the election of grace; and he made still a further limitation with regard to the children of Jacob. For all they who are descended from the patriarch, according to the flesh, are not the children of promise; all who are of Israel are not truly Israel, or the people of God. The calling of the nation of Israel is indeed without repentance; and, therefore, Israel as a nation, shall yet be gathered; but many individuals who belong to that nation shall perish. "Israel," as the apostle speaks, understanding by that word all the descendants of Jacob, "hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it," *i. e.* those who are elected have obtained it: a remnant is saved, while the rest were blinded; and in place of that great body of Israelites, who thus appear by the event not to have been elected, God hath called a people which before were not his people; he is made manifest by the Gospel to them that asked not after him, and, through the fall of a great part of Israel, salvation is come to the Gentiles.

To all the objections which human reason can suggest against this dispensation, the answer made by the apostle is conveyed in this question, "who art thou that replies against God?" He represents, by a striking similitude, the condition of the creatures as entirely at the disposal of him who made them; and he concludes all his reasoning in these words, Rom. xi. 33—36, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things; to whom be glory for ever, Amen." In these verses, the very principles which are the foundation of Calvinism are laid down by an inspired apostle, and applied by him to account for this fact, that of a nation, which was chosen by God, many individuals perish; and the account which they furnish is this, that under the declared purpose of calling the whole nation to the knowledge of the truth, there was a secret

purpose respecting individuals, which secret purpose stands in the salvation of some and the destruction of others; while the declared purpose stands also respecting the whole nation. If these principles apply to the peculiar people of God under the Mosaic dispensation, they may be applied also to Christians, who, by enjoying the Gospel, come in place of that peculiar people, and are so designed in Scripture; and the apostle seems to teach us, by his reasoning with regard to Israel, that we have not attained his full meaning, when we interpret what he says concerning the predestination of Christians merely of those outward privileges, which being common to all are abused by many; but that with regard to them, as with regard to Israel, there is a purpose of election according to grace which shall stand, because they who are elected shall obtain the end which all profess to seek, while the rest are blinded. According to this method of interpreting these two chapters, we learn from the apostle that there is the same sovereignty,—the same exercise of the good pleasure of God in the election of individuals as in the illumination of nations, that both are accounted for upon the same principles, and that with respect to both, God silences all, who say that there is unrighteousness in him, by that declaration, which he employed when he conferred a signal mark of his favour upon Moses, "I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion upon whom I will have compassion."

3. There are passages both in the Epistles and in other parts of Scripture, which appear to declare the election of some individuals and the reprobation of others, without any regard to the nations to which they belong. I do not mean that there are passages of this kind, the application of which in support of the Calvinistic system has not been controverted; for upon a subject which the Scriptures have left involved in much obscurity, and upon which they have chosen rather to furnish incidental hints than a complete delineation, it is easy for ingenious men to give a plausible exposition of particular texts, so as to accommodate them to their own system. I do not consider that all the texts which are quoted in support of the Calvinistic system admit, according to the rules of sound and fair criticism, of that interpretation which is adopted by those

who quote them; nor do I mean to hold forth as insignificant the objections made to the Calvinistic interpretation of the texts which I am now to mention. But I arrange them under this third head, because it appears to me that the interpretation connected with that arrangement is the most natural, and that, when taken in conjunction with the other support which the Calvinistic system derives from Scripture, they contain an argument of real weight.

1. Our Lord calls the Christians ἐκλεκτοι, Matth. xxiv. 22, 24, and Luke xviii. 7, when this name does not seem to have any reference to the purpose of calling the Gentiles, or to the election of his apostles to their office. The name is given to those Jews who had embraced the Gospel before the destruction of Jerusalem. They were distinguished from their countrymen by their faith in Christ; and on account of this distinction were permitted to escape that destruction, which overtook all the rest of their nation. Now the faith of these Christian Jews is represented by the name ἐκλεκτοι, a word which here can have no reference to the distinction between Jews and Gentiles, but seems employed on purpose to remind them that their faith flowed, not from any exertion of their own, but from the good pleasure and appointment of God, who chose them out from amongst their countrymen.

2. Our Lord comprehends his true disciples, all who are to be saved by him, under this general expression, John vi. 37, 39, πᾶν ὁ δεδωκε or διδωσι μοι ὁ πατηρ. He applies, indeed, in John xvii. the phrase οὑς δεδώκας μοι to all the twelve apostles, not excluding Judas; so that their being given him by God means nothing more in that place than the phrase used, John xv. 16, οὐχ ὑμεις με ἐξελἐξασθε, ἀλλ' ἐγω ὑμας ἐξελεξαμην—their designation and election to the office of Apostles, without any respect to their personal character or to their own salvation. But when the two chapters are compared, it is instantly perceived that the same phrase is used in different senses; because it is said, John vi. 39, "this is the Father's will, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing;" whereas it is said, John xvii. 12, "those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition." Our Lord's expression in chap. vi., being thus clearly discriminated from the similar expression in chap. xvii., seems to

imply that the infallible salvation of all true Christians arises from the destination of God.

3. Acts xiii. 48. Και επιστευσαν οσοι ησαν τεταγμενοι εις ζωην αιωνιον. All who oppose the Calvinistic system understand τεταγμενοι to mean nothing more than the English word disposed, *i. e.* persons who had prepared themselves, who were qualified by the disposition of their minds for eternal life. But this use of the word is neither agreeable to its primary meaning nor supported by any authority. The word properly means set in order for eternal life; and the ordering is marked, by the passive voice, as proceeding from some other being. So the powers that are, Rom. xiii. 1, by which the apostle means civil authority, υπο του Θεου τεταγμεναι εισι. Οσοι is manifestly a partitive of the Gentiles, all of whom had heard the same discourse preached by Paul and Barnabas in the synagogue of Antioch, and all of whom had rejoiced in hearing it; and the clause appears intended to account for its producing an effect upon some, of more permanent and substantial value than the gladness which it had produced in all. The account given is the destination of God, who, having meant to bring some of them to eternal life, set them in order for that end, by giving them faith.

4. There is one passage in the epistle to the Romans, where the apostle uses the words προοριζω, εκλεκτοι, προθεσις, without seeming to have in his eye the difference between Jews and Gentiles. Rom. viii. 28—33. Although the twenty-ninth verse be understood to mean nothing more than this, that God ordained that those who are the called according to his purpose should endure suffering like Jesus Christ, it requires a manifest perversion of the following verses to deprive the Calvinistic system of the support which it obviously derives both from the particular phrases and from the train of the apostle's reasoning. It would seem, indeed, that the first part of the twenty-ninth verse favours the Arminian system, by making foreknowledge previous to predestination. To this the Calvinists are accustomed to give one or other of the following answers. They either understand προεγνω to mean not foreknowledge, but that peculiar discriminating affection of which the elect are the objects; or, answering in a manner which has a less captious and evasive appearance, they admit

that a perfect foreknowledge of all that the elect are to do enters into the decree of predestination, but they deny that it is the cause of their election, because all that is done by the elect is in consequence of the strength communicated to them by the grace of God. This answer to the Arminian interpretation of Rom. viii. 29. leads me to the third head, under which I arranged that support which the Calvinistic system derives from Scripture.

SECTION III.

THE various descriptions of that change of character, by which men are prepared for eternal life, seem intended to magnify the power and to declare the efficacy of that grace by which it is produced.

All the passages usually quoted under this head furnish clear evidence of what is called, in theological language, grace, an influence of God upon the mind of man, and in their proper and literal meaning seem to denote that kind of influence which enters into the Calvinistic system. Yet many of them are not decisive of the controversy between the Calvinists and the Arminians, because the Arminians find it possible to give them an interpretation, not inconsistent with their account of the nature of that influence. Thus they are accustomed to quote that saying of our Lord, "without me ye can do nothing," as a proof that preventing grace is necessary to all men. They interpret that saying of the apostle, "faith is the gift of God," as only a proof that without an administration of the means of grace, and a moral suasion accompanying them, none can attain faith; and they consider this expression of our Lord, "No man can come to me except the Father draw him," as marking in the most significant manner that kind of moral suasion, of which the Almighty speaks by the prophet Hosea, "I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love." This specimen shows that upon a subject so far removed from observation and experience, it is not difficult for ingenious men to elude, in a very plausible manner, the argument drawn from those texts, which a

person educated with Calvinistic ideas, considers as unequivocal proofs of his system. Yet there are three kinds of passages in Scripture, which, when taken together, it appears to me almost impossible to reconcile with the Arminian account of grace.

The first are those which represent the natural powers of the human mind, attainments in knowledge, and the most distinguished advantages in respect of religion, as of none avail in producing faith without the action of the Spirit of God; while his teaching is represented as infallibly producing that effect. Of this kind are the following:—1 Cor. ii. 14; i. 22, 23, 24; iii. 5, 6, 7. John vi. 45.

The second are those which derive the account of this inefficacy of all the other means, that seem fitted to produce faith, from the corruption of human nature. This corruption is chiefly described in epistles addressed to Christian churches, composed of those who had formerly been heathens; and the descriptions have a particular reference to the vices which abounded amongst them before they were converted to the Christian faith. But the history of the world and the experience of all ages may satisfy us that these descriptions, with some allowance for local manners, for the progress of civilization, and for the influence of Christianity, are applicable to the general state of mankind. The apostle begins his epistle to the Romans with a formal proof that all men, both Jews and Gentiles, are under sin; and this universal corruption of the posterity of Adam, although the foundation of the Gospel, is by no means a peculiar doctrine of revelation, but, independently of that authority, is established by various incontrovertible evidence. Now all the Scripture statements of this corruption imply a moral inability to attain that character which is necessary to salvation. Of this kind are the following:—Eph. ii. 1. Eph. iv. 18, 19. Rom. viii. 7, 8.

The third are those which represent the action of the Spirit of God in removing this inability, by phrases exactly corresponding to these descriptions of the corruption. Of this kind are the following:—Ezek. xxxvi. 26. John iii. 5. 2 Cor. v. 17. Eph. ii. 10. Eph. i. 19; where the power exerted in quickening those who are dead in sins is

compared to the power which was exerted in raising Christ from the dead. Phil. ii. 13.

The Arminians, considering the literal sense of these passages as subversive of moral agency, attempt to give such an explication of them as is consistent with the Arminian account of grace. But if the Calvinists are able to show that a renovation of the powers of human nature leaves a man as much a moral agent as he was at the beginning—that his liberty is not destroyed by the action of God upon his mind, then there is no occasion for having recourse to that Arminian commentary, which takes away the propriety and significancy of the figures used in these phrases; but we may preserve the consistency of Scripture and the analogy of faith, by admitting that kind of influence which corresponds to the corruption of human nature, which, although resisted at first in consequence of that corruption, is in the end efficacious, and which owes its efficacy not to any quality that the recipient possesses independently of divine grace, but to the good pleasure and the power of that Being, who is as able to quicken a soul dead in sin as to raise a body from the dust, and who declares in Scripture the sovereignty of his grace, by teaching us that all other means are insignificant, till he is pleased to renew the soul which he made.

SECTION IV.

In order to complete the view of that support which the Calvinistic system derives from Scripture, it only remains to state the answer which the Calvinists give to that objection against their system, which has been drawn from the commands, the counsels, and the expostulations of Scripture. This objection, with which all Arminian books are filled, I shall present in the words of Dr. Whitby, taken from different parts of his discourses on the Five points.

"If conversion be wrought only by the unfrustrable operation of God, then vain are all the commands and exhortations addressed to wicked men to turn from their evil ways; for it is no more in their power to do this than to create a world. Vain are all the threatenings denounced in Scripture against those who go on without amendment, because such threatenings can only move the elect by the fear of their perishing, which is a false and an impossible supposition, and can only move those who are not elected by suggesting the possibility of their avoiding the death and ruin threatened, although it is to them inevitable. Vain are all the promises of pardon to those who repent, because these are promises made upon a condition which to the non-elect is impossible."—"All the commands and exhortations directed by God to the faithful to persevere in well-doing, all cautions to take heed lest they fall away, all expressions which suspend our future happiness on this condition, that we continue steadfast to the end, are plain indications that God hath made no absolute decree that good men shall not fall away. For as when motives are used to induce men to embrace Christianity, or to perform any Christian duty, these motives contain an evidence that it is possible for men to do otherwise, so also when motives are used to induce men to persevere in the profession which they have undertaken, they necessarily contain an evidence, that any man, who is induced by them to persevere in the course of a Christian, had it in his power not to persevere."—"Can God be serious and in good earnest in calling men to faith and repentance, and yet serious and in good earnest in his decree to deny them that grace without which they neither can believe nor repent? If we consider with what vehemence and what pathetic expressions God desires the obedience and reformation of his people, can it be rationally imagined that there was any thing wanting on his part, and that he should himself withhold the means sufficient to enable them to do what he thus earnestly wishes they had done?"

The answer made by the Calvinists, to all reasonings and interrogations of this kind, appears to me to consist of the five following branches, which I have arranged in the order that is most natural, and which I shall not spread

out at length, but leave to be filled up by private reading and reflection.

1. The Calvinists say that it is a misrepresentation of their doctrine to state the efficacy of the grace of God as superseding commands, counsels, and exhortations, or rendering them unnecessary with regard to the elect. The purpose of that grace is to produce in the elect the character which is inseparably connected with salvation. For the Calvinists, no less than the Arminians, hold that the promise of eternal life is conditional, suspended upon perseverance in well-doing. What is peculiar to them is, that they consider the fulfilment of the condition, in those who are elected to eternal life, as depending upon the action of the Spirit of God: but the method, in which they reconcile this action with the liberty of a moral agent, implies the exhibition of all the moral inducements fitted to act upon reasonable beings; and although they hold that all means are ineffectual without the grace of God, yet it appears to them, that when the means of improving the human character, which the Scripture employs, are considered as parts of that series of causes and effects by which the Almighty executes his decree, the necessity and the efficacy of them is established upon the surest ground. Hence the Calvinists do not perceive any inconsistency between the promise, "I will give you a new heart," and the precept, "make you a new heart and a new spirit;" between the declaration, "we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works," and the precept, which seems to imply that we are our own workmanship, "that ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Far from perceiving any inconsistency between the promise and the precept, they admire the harmony with which the two conspire in the infallible production of the same end. For the divine counsels, commands, and invitations to obedience, by making that impression upon the minds of the elect which the authority and kindness therein exhibited have a tendency to produce upon reasonable beings, are the instruments of fulfilling the divine intention, by conducting the elect in a manner conform-

able to their nature, and through the free exercise of every Christian grace, to that happiness which had been from eternity destined for them.

2. The Calvinists say that these counsels and commands, which are intended by God to produce their full effect only with regard to the elect, are addressed indifferently to all, for this reason, because it was not revealed to the writers of the New Testament, nor is it now revealed to the ministers of the Gospel, who the elect are. The Lord knoweth them that are his: but he hath not given this knowledge to any of the children of men. We are not warranted to infer from the former sins of any person that he shall not at some future period be conducted by the grace of God to repentance; and therefore we are not warranted to infer that the counsels and exhortations of the divine word, which are some of the instruments of the grace of God, shall finally prove vain with regard to any individual. But although it is in this way impossible for a discrimination to be made in the manner of publishing the Gospel, and although many may receive the calls and commands of the Gospel who are not in the end to be saved, the Calvinists do not admit that even with regard to them these calls and commands are wholly without effect. For,

3. They say that the publication of the Gospel is attended with real benefit even to those who are not elected. It points out to them their duty; it restrains them from flagrant transgressions, which would be productive of much present inconvenience, and would aggravate their future condemnation: it has contributed to the diffusion and the enlargement of moral and religious knowledge, to the refinement of manners, and to the general welfare of society; and it exhibits such a view of the condition of man, and of the grace from which the remedy proceeds, as magnifies both the righteousness and the compassion of the Supreme Ruler, and leaves without excuse those who continue in sin.

4. The Calvinists say further, that, although these general uses of the publication of the Gospel come very far short of that saving benefit which is confined to the elect, there is no want of meaning or of sincerity in the expostulations of Scripture, or in its reproaches and pathetic ex-

pressions of regret with regard to those who do not obey the counsels and commands that are addressed to all. For these counsels and commands declare what is the duty of all, what they feel they ought to perform, what is essential to their present and their future happiness, and what no physical necessity prevents them from doing. There is indeed a moral inability, a defect in their will. But the very object of counsels and commands is to remove this defect; and if such a defect rendered it improper for the Supreme Ruler to issue commands, every sin would carry with it its own excuse; and the creatures of God might always plead that they were absolved from the obligation of his law, because they were indisposed to obey it. It is admitted by the Calvinists, that the moral inability in those who are not elected is of such a kind as will infallibly prevent their obeying the commands of God; and it is a part of their system, that the Being who issues these commands has resolved to withhold from such persons the grace which alone is sufficient to remove that inability. In accounting for these commands, therefore, they are obliged to have recourse to a distinction between the secret and the revealed will of God. They understand, by his revealed will, that which is preceptive, which declares the duty of his creatures, containing commands agreeable to the sentiments of their minds and the constitution of their nature, and delivering promises which shall certainly be fulfilled to all who obey the commands. They understand, by his secret will, his own purpose in distributing his favours and arranging the condition of his creatures; a purpose which is founded upon the wisest reasons, and is infallibly carried into execution by his sovereign power, but which, not being made known to his creatures, cannot possibly be the rule of their conduct. This distinction, although the subject of much obloquy in all Arminian books, appears, upon a fair examination, only a more guarded method of stating what we found to be said by the advocates for universal redemption. Their language is, that God intends to save all men by the death of Christ, but that this intention becomes effectual only with regard to those who repent and believe. The Calvinists, not choosing to hold a language which implies that an intention of God can prove fruitless, interpret all the counsels, and commands,

and expostulations, which are urged in proof of an intention to save all men, as expressions only of a revealed will, but not as implying any purpose which is to be carried into effect. When they find in Scripture such general propositions as the following, "he that believeth on me hath everlasting life,"—"whoso confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall have mercy;" they consider them both as declaring a rule of conduct, and as delivering a promise which is fulfilled with regard to every individual who believes and repents; and as they know that these propositions never can prove false, so it does not appear to them that there is any inconsistency between the general terms in which the propositions are enunciated, and the special grace by which God produces faith and repentance in those whom he has predestinated to everlasting life.

5. The Calvinists say, in the last place, that if there is a difficulty in reconciling the earnestness with which God appears in Scripture to seek the salvation of all men, with the infallible execution of his decree that only some shall be saved, this difficulty is not peculiar to their system, but belongs to the Arminian also. If with the Socinians we abridge the foreknowledge of God, then his counsels and exhortations to all men will appear to us the natural expressions of an anxiety, such as we often feel, about an effect, of the production of which we are uncertain. But if with the Arminians we admit that the determinations of free agents were from eternity known to God, then we must admit also that he addresses counsels and exhortations to those, upon whom he knows they will not produce their full effect. As he sent of old by Moses a command to Pharaoh to let the children of Israel go, although at the very time of giving the command he says, "and I am sure that he will not let you go;"* as our Lord said to his disciples, "watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation,"† although the whole tenor of the discourse, of which these words are a part, discovers his certain knowledge that all the disciples were to yield to temptation, Peter by denying, and the rest by forsaking him: so the word of God continues to warn men against sins which they will commit, to prescribe duties which they will not

* Exod. iii. 18, 19. † Matth. xxvi. 41.

perform, and to give them, in the language of the warmest affection, counsels, upon which the obstinacy of their hearts is to pour contempt. The answer made by the Arminians to the Socinian charge of a want of seriousness and sincerity in warnings, precepts, and counsels, uttered by a Being who foresees their final inefficacy, is this, that it is fit and proper for God to declare to men their duty; that the perverseness of their wills does not diminish their obligations, and that his foreknowledge of that perverseness has no influence in giving his counsels less effect upon their minds. The very same answer may be adopted by the Calvinists. For although they infer, from the perfection of the Supreme Mind, and from various expressions in Scripture, that there is a decree by which certain persons are elected, while others are left to perish; yet, as the particulars of this decree are nowhere made known to us, they cannot regard it as in any respect the rule of our conduct; and although they do not think themselves at liberty to follow the Socinians in denying the extent of the divine understanding, yet, like the Socinians, they receive the authoritative injunctions of the divine word as the will of our Creator; they study to learn from thence, not the unknown purposes of divine wisdom, but the measure of our obedience; and they say with Moses, who, in his last address to the children of Israel, Deut. xxix. 29, appears to give his sanction to the distinction made by them, "the secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us, and to our childen for ever, that we may do all the words of this law."

CHAP. XI.

HISTORY OF CALVINISM

THE history of that system of opinions, now called Calvinistic, extends almost from the beginning of the Christian era to the present period. It is not my province to detail the names of all those by whom these opinions have been held, the ages in which they lived, the books which they wrote, the opposition or the encouragement which they received. But I think it may be interesting and useful to subjoin to the discussions, in which we have lately been engaged, a short comprehensive view of the state of the opinions which were the subjects of the discussions, during the different stages of their progress.

Those who hold the Calvinistic system find its origin in several expressions of our Lord, and in many parts of the writings of Paul. Those who hold the opposite system give a different interpretation of all the passages in which this origin is sought for. The dispute is not decided by referring to the most ancient Christian writers, for they express themselves generally in the language of Scripture with much simplicity; they do not appear to have possessed great critical talents; and they avoid entering into any profound speculations. It is not ascertained what was the system of Christians in the first four centuries, or whether they had formed any system upon this intricate subject. But in the fifth century systems very similar to those which are now held were opposed to one another. The voluminous writings of Augustine, by whom one of the systems was established, are extant; and we learn the outlines of the opposite system, both from the large ex-

tracts out of the works of its supporters, which are found in his writings, and from other collateral testimony. Although the system combated by Augustine was not completely evolved till his day, yet the principles from which it took its rise may be traced back to those philosophical speculations, which, in the former centuries, had occupied a great part of the attention of Christian writers. Even in the days of the apostles, some who had been educated in the schools of the philosophers, professed to embrace Christianity; and the number of learned Christians continued to increase in every century. Not content with the simple form in which the doctrines of revelation had been held by their more illiterate predecessors, these learned converts introduced a spirit of research, a refinement of speculation, and a systematical arrangement, of which the sacred writers have not set an example. The tenets, which many of these converts had imbibed in their youth, and which they were far from relinquishing when they assumed the name of Christians, were so opposite to the truth, and the pride of human science, in which they had been educated, was so inconsistent with that temper which Jesus requires in all who are taught by him, that the Gospel, instead of being improved, was in various respects corrupted by this early mixture of philosophy. It is probable that when the apostle Paul speaks in his epistles of a danger that Christians might be "spoiled through philosophy and vain deceit,"* and of "oppositions of science falsely so called,"† he means that kind of philosophy which was characteristical of the Gnostic sects; and it is known, that, in the first three centuries, the grossest adulterations of Christianity arose from the principles of that philosophy.

Many sects of Christians were in this manner led to account for those differences of human character which have always been observed, by holding, that some souls are naturally and essentially evil, being either entirely formed by the evil spirit, or so completely under his influence as to be unable to emancipate themselves; and that others derive so large a proportion of their nature from the good Spirit, as to find no difficulty in preserving

* Col. ii. 8 † 1 Tim. vi. 20.

their integrity. The errors connected with this physical discrimination of souls were combated with much learning about the end of the third century by Origen, who had been bred in the Platonic school of Alexandria, and who brought from the philosophy there taught those sublime conceptions of the Deity, which do not admit of independent power being ascribed to a being set in opposition to God. He taught that all souls originally proceeded from the Deity; that they were by nature capable of being either good or evil, and that the character which they attain depends upon their own free will,—upon the exercise which they choose to make of the powers given them by their Creator.

The very important services, which the erudition and the labours of Origen rendered to the Christian church, procured a considerable degree of credit to the most singular of his opinions in the countries where his works were known. Various circumstances conspired, in the course of the fourth century, to diffuse through the west some knowledge of his writings; and Pelagius, a native of Britain, who made them his chief study during his residence at Rome in the beginning of the fifth century, drew, from the doctrine which Origen had opposed to Manichean errors, the fundamental position of his system, that notwithstanding the sin of our first parents we are able, by the powers of our nature, without any supernatural aid, to yield obedience to the commands of God. The report of this system, which from its affinity to the doctrine of Origen found with many an easy reception, called forth the exertions of Augustine, bishop of Hippo in Africa. He had formerly written against the Manicheans; but it appeared to him that Pelagius, who, in his zeal to maintain that no souls were the work of the evil spirit, denied the present corruption of human nature, had gone beyond Origen, and had departed far from the truth: and in his voluminous works he laid down a system of predestination and grace, which, with some little variety of expression, is the same with that which we have called Calvinistic. Augustine acknowledged, that in the course of his studying the Scriptures his sentiments had undergone a considerable change: and those who were averse to his system affirmed, that in his writings against Pelagius he

adopted many positions which he had condemned in the Manicheans. We are not bound to defend the consistency of all that Augustine has said; but if his system be founded in reason and in Scripture, it may unquestionably be discriminated from the Manichean system; and we, who hold the Calvinistic tenets, think that we are able to make the discrimination. For we consider the decree, by which a wise and good Being from eternity ordained all that is to be, as essentially distinct from that fate which excludes every exercise of intelligence in fixing the great scheme of the universe; and we consider the measure of evil which, for reasons unknown to us, the Almighty Sovereign permits to exist in his work, as leaving unshaken those fundamental principles of religion, which are completely undermined by the belief that this evil originates from the power of an opposite spirit not under the control of God, or from an essential pravity in matter which he is unable to remove.

From the days of Augustine two opposite systems of predestination have been known in the Christian church, and each of them has had able and numerous defenders. The system of Pelagius was modified in the writings of Cassian and Faustus; and, under the less offensive form which is known by the name of Semi-Pelagianism, it obtained a favourable reception in the East, from which it originated. But in the western parts of Christendom, where the writings of the learned Augustine were held in the highest veneration, the system which he had delineated received the sanction both of general councils and of the Bishops of Rome, who were rising by insensible steps to the station which they afterwards held; and under this authority it came to be regarded as the orthodox faith of the Latin church. The opposite system, however, had many adherents, both in Britain, the native country of Pelagius, and in Gaul, where Cassian first published the Semi-Pelagian doctrine; and it appears that, in the universal ignorance which overspread Europe during the succeeding centuries, many who professed to hold the orthodox faith were unacquainted with the extent of the doctrine of Augustine. Accordingly we find Godeschalcus, an illustrious Saxon monk, persecuted in the ninth century by his superiors, and condemned by some councils

assembled to judge him, for holding doctrines which seem to correspond in all points with the tenets now called Calvinistic: we find his memory vindicated by succeeding councils, who declared their approbation of his doctrine; and we learn from the history of his opinions, that the Christian church in those days, as in all the controversies upon the same intricate subject in succeeding ages, veered between two systems, of which sometimes the one and sometimes the other was most ably defended.

The question occasioned by the opposition of these systems, after having been buried for some centuries, like every other, in the barbarity of the times, was revived in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries by Thomas Aquinas and Joannes Scotus, the fathers of school divinity, who, applying the language of the philosophy of Aristotle to theological questions, appeared to speak with a precision formerly unknown, but who, multiplying words far beyond the number of clear ideas, increased the natural darkness of many subjects which they pretended to discuss. I will not undertake the grievous and worthless labour of explaining the terms in which the doctrine of Augustine was stated by Thomas Aquinas, a monk of the Dominican order, nor those in which a doctrine somewhat similar to that which is now opposed to Augustine was defended by Scotus, a monk of the Franciscan order. The Latin church, of which the Bishop of Rome had become the acknowledged head, continued to be agitated by the controversy between the Thomists and the Scotists; insomuch that although that church venerated the name of Augustine, and professed to build its tenets upon his authority, individual writers were very far from being agreed as to the points that are embraced by his system, and the avowed creed of the church was gradually removed at a greater distance from the doctrine of Augustine.

When the enormous height which the growing corruptions of Popery had attained in the sixteenth century induced Martin Luther, a friar of the order of St. Austin, to begin the reformation, he adhered to the principles of that doctrine in which he had been educated; and, in exposing to the indignation of mankind the shameful traffic of indulgences, he derived, from a system which taught the corruption of human nature and the efficacy of divine

grace, a convincing answer to those tenets of the church of Rome concerning the merit of good works upon which that traffic was founded. All the parts of the system of predestination which are delineated in the writings of Augustine were taught by Luther. But Melancthon, who was at first his colleague, and who succeeded to a considerable share of his influence after his death, was led, by an accommodating temper and by a concurrence of circumstances, to adopt principles which it does not appear to me possible to distinguish from the Semi-Pelagian. These principles entered into the confessions of faith and apologies for the cause of reformation, which received the sanction of the name of Melancthon: they were recommended by his authority to many of the earliest reformers in Germany; and they continue to form a part of the creed of those churches which are called Lutheran.

In Switzerland, the reformation, which had been begun by Zuinglius, received the most valuable support from the learning, the abilities, and the industry of John Calvin, who settled at Geneva in the year 1541, and continued, till his death in 1564, a zealous and indefatigable champion of that doctrine, which he professes to have learned from Augustine. In his Christian Institutes, which were first published in 1536, he acknowledges that it was the common opinion that God elected men according to his foreknowledge of their conduct, so that predestination rested upon the prescience of God. But in opposition to this opinion, which he says was both held by the vulgar and had in all ages been defended by authors of great name, he lays down that system which we have been accustomed, in honour of its ablest supporter, to call by the name of Calvinism; and such was the impression made upon the minds of men by his writings, and so rapidly were his opinions disseminated by the numbers who flocked to the university which he established at Geneva, that the Calvinistic system of predestination was received by a great part of those Christians who left the church of Rome, and even by many who had at first embraced the tenets of Melancthon. There came in this way to be a difference of opinion upon the subject of predestination between the Lutheran and the Reformed churches. We apply the term Lutheran to the churches in the German empire, and in

the different kingdoms of Europe, which adhered to the Confession of Augsburg, *Confessio Augustana*, the declaration of their faith presented by the Protestants to the Diet of the empire, held by Charles V. 1530, and to those explications, which the controverted points not particularly stated in that confession received from the subsequent writings of Melancthon. We apply the term Reformed to the churches in Germany; in Switzerland, in the Netherlands, in Britain, in France, and in other parts of Europe, whose confessions of faith comprehended the peculiar tenets of Calvinism. The two words were used in this sense soon after the days of Calvin and Melancthon, and the same use of them still continues. When we speak of the Reformation, we mean that revolution in the sentiments of a great part of the inhabitants of Europe with regard to religion, which was accomplished in the sixteenth century by the united labours of Luther, Melancthon, Zuinglius, Calvin, Beza, and other reformers. But when we speak of the Reformed Churches, we generally mean to distinguish them from the Lutheran; and the name implies that they are considered as having departed farther than the Lutheran from the corruptions of Popery. There are differences between the Reformed and the Lutheran Churches respecting ecclesiastical discipline and government which it may afterwards occur to mention. But the most important difference in point of doctrine respects the subject of which we are now speaking; the Reformed, professing in their creeds and standards to hold the Calvinistic system of predestination; the Lutheran, to adhere to the system of Melancthon.

John Knox, a disciple of Calvin, while he formed the constitution of the church of Scotland upon the plan of ecclesiastical government which Calvin had established in Geneva, introduced into Scotland all the tenets called Calvinistic; and although the Confession of Faith, the authentic standard of the faith of our church, does not pay any deference to the name or authority of the reformer—although the ministers of this church are not bound, by subscribing the Confession of Faith, to defend every part of the conduct of Calvin and every sentence found in his writings, yet the leading features of the doctrine of our church concerning predestination are avowedly Calvinistic.

In England, the first reformers, who appeared before the days of Calvin, followed in worship and in the form of ecclesiastical government the Lutheran churches in which they had received their education. But in the days of Queen Elizabeth, when the thirty-nine articles, which are the Confession of Faith of the church of England, came, after much preparation, to be published with royal authority, the doctrines of Calvin were held in universal estimation, were taught in the English universities, and were the creed of the dignified clergy whom the Queen employed in preparing the articles. Accordingly even those, who hold that the seventeenth article admits of an interpretation not inconsistent with Arminianism, acknowledge that it was penned by Calvinists, and that the Calvinistic sense, which naturally occurs to every reader, was truly the meaning of those who composed it. And upon this ground we think ourselves entitled to say that the two established churches of this island, although distinguished from the time of the Reformation in respect of discipline, worship, and government, were at first united in holding the same doctrine; and that the standards which both churches continue to require their ministers to subscribe, as the standards of their faith, were originally founded upon Calvinistic tenets.

Upon the Continent, where some churches were Lutheran and others reformed, the points in dispute between them were brought strongly before the public, about the beginning of the seventeenth century, by the writings of Arminius, professor of divinity in the university of Leyden. Arminius, although educated in the doctrines of the church of Geneva, had early entertained doubts concerning the Calvinistic system of predestination; and, after he was admitted professor of divinity, he did not consider himself bound, by any authority which he could not lawfully disobey, to teach that particular system. He possessed that vigorous mind and that acute understanding which prepare a man for deep investigation. He was not disposed to rest in the opinions of others; and his own conceptions of every subject to which he turned his attention were clear and comprehensive. The opinions concerning predestination, which were at that time held in the Lutheran churches, being more agreeable to his mind

than the Calvinistic, received from him a scientific form. He laid the foundation of them in that view of the prescience of God formerly explained; and by following out leading ideas through all their consequences, he introduced that unity of principle, that harmony of parts, and that precision and clearness of language, which entitle his doctrine to the name of a system. This system, recommended by the abilities, the eloquence, and the reputation of Arminius, not only spread through the Lutheran churches, but made an impression upon the minds of many who had been educated in the principles of Calvinism; and, proceeding from an university founded in one of the Reformed churches, it encountered at its first appearance a most formidable opposition. Arminius died in 1609. But the hold which his principles had taken of the minds of men, and the zeal with which they were propagated by his disciples, excited much commotion immediately after his death. The inhabitants of the United Provinces, who held these principles, presented to the States-general in 1610 a petition or remonstrance, from which they received the name of remonstrants. By this they have ever since been distinguished. It happened that Grotius, and other leading men in the States, who were at that time in opposition to the Prince of Orange, favoured the principles of the remonstrants. This circumstance naturally formed an union between the house of Orange and the contra-remonstrants or Calvinists; and thus political interests came to mingle their influence in the discussion of theological questions. Many conferences were held between the Arminians and the Calvinists, without convincing either party. Many schemes to accomplish a reconciliation proved abortive; and at length it was resolved by the States of Holland to summon a meeting of deputies from all the Protestant churches, after the manner of the General Councils which had been held in former ages, where the points in dispute might be canvassed and decided.

In the year 1618, there assembled at Dort, a town in the province of South Holland, deputies from the churches of the United Provinces, from Britain, and from many States in Germany, who formed what is known in ecclesiastical history by the name of the Synod of Dort, *Syno-*

dus Dordracena. The learned and eloquent Episcopius, the successor of Arminius, appeared at the head of the leading men amongst the Arminians or Remonstrants to defend their cause. But being dissatisfied with the manner in which the Synod proposed to proceed, Episcopius and his adherents refused to submit to the directions which were given them as to the method of their defence, and in consequence of this refusal they were excluded from sitting in the assembly. After an hundred and fifty-four meetings, the five articles, in which the Arminians had at a former conference stated their doctrine, were formally condemned by the Synod as heretical. What we call the Calvinistic system of predestination was declared by a confession of faith, founded on the decrees of the Synod, to be the orthodox faith of the Reformed churches in the Netherlands; and the catechism of Heidelberg, which was originally composed by order of the Elector Palatine for the use of his subjects, and which comprehends the leading principles of the Calvinistic system, was adopted as one of their standards, a method of instructing the young, and a directory for the public teaching of their ministers. In consequence of the judgment of the synod of Dort, the Arminians were excommunicated, and were at first obliged to leave their possessions in the United Provinces. But they were recalled in a few years under a milder administration of government: they are allowed several churches in different cities of Holland; and they have a college at Amsterdam, where there has been a succession of able men, Episcopius, Limborch, Le Clerc, and Wetstein; who, while they profess to instil into the candidates for the ministry in their communion all the principles which Arminius taught, have been accused of approaching gradually much nearer to Socinianism than he did.

The consent given by the British divines to the decrees of the Synod is a proof that the churches of England and of Scotland, by whom they were sent, adhered to the Calvinistic tenets, and that James I., who had joined his influence with that of the House of Orange in the convocation of the Synod, was disposed to favour that system. One of the ablest defences of the Calvinistic system of predestination is a small treatise written against Hoard,

an Arminian, by Davenant, one of the deputies from England, at that time professor of divinity in Cambridge, and afterwards bishop of Salisbury. The title of his book is, Animadversions upon a Treatise, entitled, God's Love to mankind.

But although we seem to be warranted in considering the voice of the leading men in Britain as favourable to Calvinism, at the time of the meeting of the Synod of Dort, it was not long before events, chiefly of a political nature, occasioned a revolution upon this point in the sentiments of James, and of those members of the church of England who were attached to the cause of monarchy. The long civil war, and the memorable change of government in the seventeenth century, arose from the political principles of men who were rigidly attached to the worship, discipline, government, and doctrine of the church of Geneva. The friends of monarchy, on the other hand, were attached to the worship, discipline, and government which the church of England had derived from the Lutheran churches: and as, in addition to these points of difference upon ecclesiastical matters, they held the political principles of the republicans in abhorrence, it was natural for them to conceive a prejudice against the theological doctrine of these republicans. They unavoidably felt a strong propensity to adopt a system of predestination by which they might be allied more closely to the Lutheran churches, with whom they had many points in common, and completely discriminated from the Calvinists, with whom they did not wish to maintain any connexion. Archbishop Laud, to whom Charles I. committed the direction of the ecclesiastical affairs of Britain, wrote a small treatise in the year 1625, to prove that the articles of the church of England admit of an Arminian sense: the countenance of the court was confined to those divines who favoured the Arminian system; and although the church of England never publicly renounced Calvinism, yet it is certain that an attachment to that system of doctrine came to be the distinguishing badge of the Puritans, who derived their name from pretending to a more spiritual kind of worship than the Episcopalians, but who were known as much by the firmness with which they

held the tenets of the church of Geneva, as by their abhorrence of forms.

When, in the progress of the commotions of the seventeenth century, episcopacy was voted to be useless and burdensome, an assembly of divines was held at Westminster, "for the purpose of settling the government and liturgy of the church of England, and for vindicating and clearing the doctrine of the said church from false aspersions and interpretations." What we call the Confession of Faith was composed by that assembly, as a part of the uniformity in religion which was then intended, and which it was the object of the Solemn League and Covenant to preserve between the churches in the three kingdoms of Scotland, England, and Ireland. When presbytery was established in Scotland at the Revolution, this Confession of Faith was ratified in the Scottish parliament: it afterwards received the sanction of the treaty of Union; and it continues to be the avowed confession of the church of Scotland. But in England, when episcopacy was revived after the Restoration, the thirty-nine articles became, as formerly, the standard of that church; the Confession of Faith was of course set aside; and the former prejudices against some of its doctrines were very much confirmed in the minds of those who were attached to episcopacy and monarchy, by their abhorrence of the views and the success of those who had given orders for its being composed.

The circumstances which have been mentioned explain the manner in which Calvinism came to be regarded, by the body of the people in England, as a name nearly allied to republicanism; and no person, who is acquainted with the history of the factions of that country, can entertain a doubt that political causes have contributed very largely to the disrepute in which that system has been held by many dignified and learned members of our neighbouring church. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that several divines of that church, who were very much superior to the weakness of being led in their theological creed by an attachment to any political party, have lent the support of their erudition and abilities to some mitigated form of Arminianism. Of this kind were Barrow, Clarke,

Whitby, and Jortin. There were also many wise and able men in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, who endeavoured to represent the points of difference between the Arminians and Calvinists as of little importance, and who received the name of Latitudinarians, from wishing to unite all true Protestants against the approaches of Popery. Of this kind were Chillingworth, Tillotson, Cudworth, and Hoadley.

It is farther to be noticed, that there has long been a general wish in the members of the church of England, to consider themselves as not fettered to any particular system of predestination by the articles which they subscribe. Bishop Burnet declares himself to be an Arminian; and after giving, in his exposition of the seventeenth article, with an impartiality more apparent than real, and with some degree of confusion, a view of the arguments upon both sides, he concludes in these words, "It is very probable that those who penned this article meant that the decree was absolute; but yet, since they have not said it, those who subscribe the articles do not seem to be bound to any thing that is not expressed in them; and, therefore, although the Calvinists have less occasion for scruple, since the article does seem more plainly to favour them, the Remonstrants may subscribe this article without renouncing their opinion as to this matter." He says, in another place, "The church has not been peremptory, but a latitude has been left to different opinions." And Dr. Jortin, in his dissertation on the controversies concerning predestination and grace, which was published in 1755, tells us how far this latitude has been used. With a partiality to his own system, and a virulence against his adversaries, which often appear to an excessive and shameful degree in his writings, he thus expresses himself: "In England, at the time of the Synod of Dort, we were much divided in our opinions concerning the controverted articles; but our divines having taken the liberty to think and judge for themselves, and the civil government not interposing, it hath come to pass, that, from that time to this, almost all persons here of any note for learning and abilities have bid adieu to Calvinism, have sided with the Remonstrants, and have left the Fatalists to follow their own opinions, and to rejoice (since

they can rejoice) in a religious system, consisting of human creatures without liberty, doctrines without sense, faith without reason, and a God without mercy."

Dr. Prettyman, or Tomline, Bishop of Lincoln, who, in his Elements of Christian Theology, has given a large commentary on the Thirty-nine Articles, labours to prove that the Seventeenth admits of an Arminian sense, and writes against Calvinism with the virulence of a man who does not understand it. He has also published a second work, which he calls a Refutation of Calvinism—a strange title for a book avowedly written by a dignitary of that church, whose founders were Calvinists, and one of whose articles, prepared by them in its natural and obvious meaning announces the characteristical doctrines of Calvinism. It contains hardly any general reasoning; it is chiefly a collection and exposition of texts, which have been often brought forward by Arminian writers; and a repetition of that abuse which they are in the habit of pouring forth upon those who differ from them. The book has already passed through many editions, and meeting the prejudices and wishes of a great body of the English clergy, is extremely popular in England. But it is by no means formidable in point of argument: and however much it may be admired by those who wish to believe the system which it professes to support, it will not shake the creed of any person well instructed in the fundamental principles of Calvinism.

While therefore the members of the church of Scotland, by subscribing the Confession of Faith, find themselves equally restrained from avowing Arminian and Arian tenets, the members of the church of England continually use that liberty which they consider as left to them, and think that they adhere to the orthodox faith of their church, when they defend the doctrine of the Trinity, and the doctrine of Atonement, although they disclaim the literal Calvinistic interpretation of the Seventeenth article. Amongst the ministers of the established Church of England, there are some who adopt this interpretation, and who upon that account are called doctrinal Calvinists. There are Universalists, who, without entering farther into the disputed points, consider the benefit of the death of Christ as extending to all, either by the general resurrection or by the

general offer of pardon upon easy terms; and there are others who scruple not to avow their attachment to all the parts of the Arminian doctrine.

It might be thought that in the church of Rome the infallibility of the Pope would furnish an effectual antidote against theological controversy. Yet, even in that church, the questions in dispute between the Arminians and Calvinists have never been decided; and large bodies of Roman Catholics have received distinguishing names from the tenets which they hold in relation to these questions. The church of Rome was inclined, by the whole system of its corruptions, as well as by its antipathy to the first reformers, to adhere to the Semi-Pelagian doctrine. The council of Trent was summoned in the sixteenth century, to give a decent colour to these corruptions, and to crush the Reformation. But the fear of offending the Dominicans, who held the doctrine of Augustine, restrained the council from openly avowing the Semi-Pelagian doctrine; and their decree upon this point, like many other wary decisions of that pretended oracle, is expressed with such obscurity and ambiguity, as to leave the matter undecided. The learning of the Jesuits, whose order arose about the middle of the sixteenth century, was employed, from the time of their institution, to overturn the doctrine of the reformers; and the term *scientia media*, invented by Molina, and introduced in the year 1588 into the controversy concerning predestination, was generally adopted by his brethren. The Jesuits were in this manner opposed to the Dominicans; and the controversy has been the occasion of many distractions and convulsions in the church of Rome, which the authority of succeeding Popes has been unable to suppress, and which their wisdom has not found an expedient method of healing. The Dominicans received, about the middle of the seventeenth century, very powerful aid from Jansenius, who, in a book entitled Augustinus, gave a full and faithful picture of the sentiments of Augustine, upon the corruption of human nature, predestination, and divine aid. This exhibition of the sentiments of Augustine demonstrated, that the Jesuits, the most zealous supporters of a church which professes the highest veneration for that father, had, upon these subjects, departed very far from his doctrine. The Je-

suits, who saw that their credit was in danger of being shaken by this discovery, exerted their influence at different times, in procuring from the Popes a condemnation of the book of Jansenius. His followers have often endured persecution; and the boasted unity of the Roman church was interrupted, both in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, by the bitterest contests between those, who, from adhering to the interpretation which Molina gave of this intricate subject, were known by the name of Molinists, and those, who, having received the knowledge of the doctrine of Augustine from the book of Jansenius, are called Jansenists.

The private passions which mingled their influence with the controversies relating to predestination, either in the Roman or in the Protestant church, are of no importance to a fair inquirer after truth. But it is impossible to look back upon the various forms of agitating the same questions which have presented themselves to us in this short review, without perceiving, that however strongly the human mind is disposed to inquire into the subject, there is much intricacy in the questions connected with it, and little probability of arriving at those clear and short conclusions which may prevent future dispute.

Hence, upon this subject, as upon the subject of the Trinity, there are two very important lessons that naturally result from all our researches, which I may be allowed to take this opportunity of impressing upon the minds of my students. The first lesson is, that they should beware of engaging the people, to whom they may be called to discourse, in those thorny speculations from which they may find it impossible to disentangle themselves, and where the incapacity of perceiving the truth may engender errors very hurtful to their comfort and their virtue. The secret will of God appears, from the very nature of the expression, to form no part of the business of preaching. Our commission is to declare to the people his revealed will: and although it may often be impossible for us to explain particular passages of Scripture, or to treat of some of the peculiar doctrines of Christianity, without a reference to the doctrine of predestination; yet care ought to be taken to present only those clear unembarrassed views of that doctrine which natu-

rally connect with practice, never to amuse the people with an account of the abuses of the doctrine, but to say what we judge proper to say of it in such a manner as to be assured that they shall learn no such abuse from us; and to endeavour, above all things, to leave upon their minds a strong impression of these most important truths, that however certain the doctrine of predestination is in general, the only certainty which any individual can attain of his predestination is inseparably joined with the distinguished exercise of every Christian grace; and that all the hearers of the Gospel are required, both by the nature of the thing, and by the constant tenor of Scripture, to try themselves, whether they are in the number of the elect, by the fruits of their election.

The second lesson which naturally results from our researches upon this subject is, that men of speculation should exercise mutual forbearance. It is not a matter of surprise, that persons of the most enlightened minds should now differ upon points which have divided the opinions of mankind ever since they began to speculate. It is not to be supposed that all the consequences which may be shown to flow from any system are held by every one who defends that system; for he may either not see that the consequences arise, or he may find some method of evading them. The Calvinists are not answerable for the various abuses of their doctrine which gave birth to the Fanatics and Antinomians of different ages; for they are able to show that in all these abuses their doctrine is perverted. Nor are the Arminians to be charged with those unworthy conceptions of the Deity which to many appear inseparable from their system; for they mean to place the justice and goodness of God in the most honourable light; and it appears to them that they err on the safe side, and that they derive a sufficient excuse from the sublimity of the subject, and the weakness of our faculties, if, in their zeal to maintain the honour of the moral attributes of the Deity, they seem to derogate from his sovereignty and independence.

While our researches upon this subject suggest these two lessons, there are also two rules to be observed in reading upon this controversy, which are rendered necessary by the manner of its being handled in former times.

The first is, not to form an opinion of either system from the writings of those who oppose it, but to do both sides the justice of considering what they say for themselves. The Arminians and the Calvinists are very much upon a footing in respect of the foul abuse which they have poured upon one another. But it should always be remembered, and, as far as my observation goes, it is a rule which you may safely follow in reading upon every subject, that from whomsoever abuse proceeds, it deserves to be treated with equal contempt; that if it is not a sure mark of the weakness of the reasoning with which it is connected, it certainly does not make the reasoning stronger; and that every candid reader sets aside all the expressions of mutual reproach, which find a place in the discussion of any question, as of no avail to the argument.

The second rule, which is necessary in reading upon this controversy, is not to think yourselves obliged to defend every position of those writers whose general system you approve, or every view of the subject which they may have presented, and to beware of conceiving any prejudice against the truth, because you find it impossible to adopt all that has been said by the friends of the truth. It has happened that many Calvinists in former times, with gloomy notions of the Deity, with a slender knowledge of philosophy, and with much animosity against their adversaries, have exhibited their system in a dress very little fitted to recommend it to the world; and it is common with Arminian writers to give a picture of that system in a number of the most exceptionable passages quoted from books of those times. This is an art very likely to succeed with men who have not leisure or capacity to inquire; and I have no doubt that the disrespectful terms in which Calvinism is often mentioned by many shallow thinkers, and even by some respectable clergymen in the church of England, arise entirely from their having read such quotations, and perhaps little more, upon the subject.

Although the style of writing upon this controversy, which occurs in many books, renders these rules necessary, it is our happiness to live in a more enlightened and more polished age, when the asperity of former times is universally condemned, when the views of men are very much

enlarged, and when Calvinism has formed an alliance with philosophy. The celebrated metaphysician Leibnitz, who flourished in the beginning of the eighteenth century, although a member of the Lutheran church, illustrated and established the doctrine of philosophical necessity, or the perfect consistency of the freedom of a moral agent with the infallible determination of his conduct, which is the foundation of Calvinism. There is a small book of his entitled "Essais de Theodicée, sur la bonté de Dieu, la liberté de l'homme, et l'origine du mal," which contains almost all the principles upon which I have rested the defence of the Calvinistic tenets. Wolfius trode in the steps of Leibnitz. Canzius published a book, entitled "Philosophiæ Leibnitianæ et Wolfianæ usus in Theologiâ per præcipua fidei capita;" and several systems of theology, written in the course of the eighteenth century, by divines of the Reformed churches on the continent, as Wyttenbach, and Stapfer, and by Edwards in America, have applied the philosophy of Leibnitz and Wolfius to explain and vindicate the doctrines of Calvin. These doctrines, instead of appearing liable to that charge of absurdity, which the Arminian writers in all times, and even in the present day, have not scrupled in opprobrious terms to advance, now assume a rational and philosophical form, and appear to be a consistent whole, arising out of a few leading ideas followed out to their consequences: while the Arminians appear to be only half-thinkers, who stop short before they arrive at the conclusion; and although they will not, like the Socinians, deny the principles, yet refuse to follow the Calvinists in making the application of them.

I have no difficulty in concluding the subject, which has engaged our attention for so long a time, by declaring it to be my conviction, that the Calvinistic system is the most philosophical. The Arminians indeed have often boasted, that all the men of learning and genius are on their side, and that those only who choose to walk in trammels adhere to Calvinism. But there is reason to think, that the progress of philosophy will gradually produce a revolution in the minds of men; that those opinions concerning the nature of human liberty, and the extent of the providence of God, from which the Calvinistic system

is easily deduced, although they have not received the countenance of Dr. Reid in his essays on the active powers, will, even in opposition to his respectable name, find a place in every system of pneumatics; and that there will thus be diffused amongst calm inquirers a more general impression, that the doctrine of the first reformers, with regard to predestination, admits of a better defence than it received from them. It gives me particular satisfaction to observe, that the late Dr. Horsley, bishop of St. Asaph, one of the profoundest scholars that ever adorned the church of England, although he has not adopted all the Calvinistic tenets, has laid down, in the most precise and satisfactory manner, those principles, from which all the tenets of Calvin that we are obliged to hold, appear to me readily to flow. In a sermon upon providence and free agency, he has declared his conviction with regard to the certain influence of motives as final causes, in reference to which the mind puts forth its powers, and as the means by which God governs the intelligent creation; and also with regard to the infallible predetermination of those events which the Almighty in this manner accomplishes. The friends of Calvinism require nothing more. We may reject every tenet which does not result from these principles; and we may solace ourselves under the scorn of many superficial writers in the church of England, who condemn what they do not understand, with the countenance of this respectable auxiliary, who, without declaring himself a partisan, has lent his assistance in clearing that strong ground which every sound and able Calvinist will now occupy.

BOOK V.

INDEX OF PARTICULAR QUESTIONS ARISING OUT OF OPINIONS CONCERNING THE GOSPEL REMEDY, AND OF MANY OF THE TECHNICAL TERMS IN THEOLOGY.

THE fifth book is the conclusion of that part of my course which is properly theological, and means to present a short view of many particular questions which have arisen out of the general principles, and of the technical terms, which, having occurred in discussing these questions, now form a part of the language of theology. Some of the questions turn upon the Nature of the Remedy; much the greater part upon the Extent and the Application of it. But none of them will require to be handled with any detail; for the length to which they are spread out in ordinary systems is only a repetition under different forms of the same principles. My object is simply to furnish you with an index of the questions to which they have been applied, and a vocabulary of the language, which has acquired a currency amongst the writers upon that science which you profess to study.

CHAP. I.

REGENERATION—CONVERSION—FAITH.

To men considered as sinners, *i. e.* both guilty and corrupt, the Gospel brings a remedy. The remedy is of saving benefit only to those by whom it is embraced. It cannot be embraced unless it be known; but it is made known to all to whom the Gospel is published; and the intimation given by publishing it, together with the invitation and the command to embrace it which always accompanies the intimation, has received, according to an expression frequent in the Epistles, the name of a call. "God hath called you by our Gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Thess. ii. 14.

The Arminians admit no other call but that which is common to all who live in a Christian country, and which is obeyed or rejected according to the disposition of the person who receives it. But the Calvinists are led by their principles to make a distinction between external and effectual calling, in support of which they quote these words of our Lord,—"Many are called, but few are chosen." The external call, which is addressed to all who live in a Christian country, carries along with it such evidences of the divine original of the Gospel, so striking an exhibition of the love of God to mankind, and so strong an obligation upon every reasonable being to attend, that it aggravates the condemnation of those by whom it is rejected. But finding men alienated from the life of God, corrupted in their understandings, their will, and their affections, it has not the effect of inducing them to embrace the remedy, unless it be accompanied by the operations of the Spirit of God. These operations, in their full ex-

tent, are peculiar to the elect for whom they were purchased, and to whom they are applied through the mediation of Christ; and therefore to them only the external call becomes effectual; in other words, they only accept the invitation and obey the command given them by that call. The call is rendered effectual with regard to them by the removal of that corruption which renders it ineffectual with regard to others;—by a change of character, which, in respect of the understanding, is such an illumination as qualifies them for receiving knowledge; in respect of the will, is an influence so powerful as effectually inclines them to follow the inducements that are proposed in the word of God; and in respect of the whole soul, produces a refinement and elevation by which the affections are determined to the worthiest objects. This introduction of the principles of a new life, into those who are considered as spiritually dead, is called, in conformity to Scripture language, regeneration.* It is also called conversion, a turning men from that state of mind and those habits of life, which enter into our view when we speak of human nature as corrupt, to those sentiments and habits which proceed from the Spirit of God.† And it is evident that when a man is thus converted, all the obstacles to his accepting the invitation in the Gospel cease to exist, and the remedy there provided, approving itself to his understanding and his heart, is cordially embraced.

Infinite is the number of questions which have been agitated in different periods concerning the manner of this conversion. But as there are two extremes in the opinions upon this subject, in the middle between which the Calvinistic system professes to lie, it is easy, without entering into any detail as to the shades of difference that distinguish particular opinions, to apprehend the leading principles of those who lean to either extreme, and to perceive the caution with which the Calvinists keep clear of both. Upon the one side are the Pelagians, the Semi-Pelagians, and all those who, under whatever name, and with whatever modifications, hold what has been called the Synergistical system. That system derives its name from

* John iii. 3, 5. 2 Cor. v. 17. Ephes. iv. 22, 23, 24.
† Matth. xviii. 3. Acts iii. 19; xv. 3. 1 Thess. i. 9.

representing man as co-operating with God in his conversion, and the efficacy of the grace of God as depending upon that co-operation. The Calvinistic system is directly opposed to this extreme; and the principles which have been illustrated afford an answer to all the forms which the Synergistical doctrine can assume. Upon the other side lie all the degrees and shades of the ancient mystical theology, which is now better known by the name of fanaticism. The character of that theology, and the manner of discriminating Calvinism from an extreme to which it seems to approach, are now to be illustrated.

The mystical spirit appeared very early in the Christian church. Its origin is to be traced not so much to the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel, as to the alliance which our religion very early formed with the Platonic philosophy. Plato held that the soul of man is an emanation from the supreme mind, at present imprisoned in the body, detained by its connexion with matter from holding communion with the Father of spirits, and exposed by the contamination of surrounding objects to the danger of being disqualified for returning to its original. He taught, therefore, that it is the duty of man, by meditation and retirement, to disentangle himself from his present fetters, and to prepare his soul, by a gradual emancipation, for the freer and happier life which awaits it after it is raised above every thing terrestrial. This principle, when applied with those qualifications and restrictions that are rendered necessary by the active engagements of life, lays the foundation of magnanimity, of sentimental devotion, and of many exercises which contribute in a high degree to the purification of the mind. But the principle is easily corrupted, and produces in men of warm imaginations, of constitutional indolence, or of feeble spirits, a variety of abuse, hurtful both to society and to the character of the individual. It was adopted in the third century by Origen, a zealous disciple of the Platonic school. Finding a ready admission with many learned Christians who had been educated in that school, and being diffused by the credit of Origen's writings through a great part of the Christian world, it early began to produce those corruptions, which, under different names, and with very different effects, have continued from that time to the present day.

From this Platonic principle, incorporated with the doctrines of the Gospel, proceeded the whole race of hermits and monks, who, beginning with Paul the hermit in the third century, spread over all parts of Christendom, and have left traces of their existence in every land. Some lived in solitude; others in small societies; but all professed, by a life of abstemiousness, mortification, and penance, to raise their souls to a more intimate communion with the Deity than is granted to ordinary men. From the same principle proceeded the pretences to immediate inspiration, assumed by men, who, continuing to live in the world, were conceived to be in this manner exalted above their neighbours as the favourites of heaven.

It is the province of ecclesiastical history to mark the shades of difference between the philosophy of the ancient Mystics, the pretended theurgy or magic of the followers of Paracelsus, the bloody, turbulent, levelling spirit which appeared in Germany at the time of the Reformation, the peaceful submissive spirit of the Quakers, who arose in the seventeenth century, the presumptuous familiarity in the language and tenets of Antonia Bourignon, against which our church guards her ministers under the name of Bourignionism, and the blasphemous incomprehensible jargon of Jacob Behmen. Whatever were their points of difference, they all agreed in the general character of fanaticism, the pretending to such an immediate communication with the Deity as furnished an inward light, to the guidance of which they resigned themselves.

Some fanatics have approached so near to Deistical principles, as to believe that there is an inward light common to all men, and sufficient, without any extraordinary revelation, to bring those who follow it to eternal life. Others, among whom is the celebrated Barclay, the author of the apology for the Quakers, treading in the steps of the advocates for universal redemption, consider this inward light as one of the benefits of the Gospel, procured for mankind by the interposition of Jesus Christ, but extending to all in every country, whether they have heard of the Gospel or not, and given with equal liberality to every man to be excited and improved by his own endeavours. And there are fanatics, who, adhering to the Calvinistic ideas, with regard to the extent of the remedy, consider this inward

light as peculiar to the elect. The ancient mystics, who had learned in the Platonic school to regard the Son as the reason and wisdom of the Father, and to call him by the names, φως, σοφια, considered the inward light vouchsafed to men as a portion of this reason or wisdom, an emanation from Christ the true light; and many modern fanatics, retaining this idea, although ignorant of the philosophical language from which it arose, and applying it to the Scripture phrases, "Christ dwelling in us, Christ formed in us," are accustomed to call the inward light to which they pretend, the hidden Christ, or the Christ within: while other fanatics, who, with the generality of Christians, regard the Holy Ghost as a distinct person, the fountain and distributer of spiritual influences, mean by the inward light the operation of the Spirit upon the mind. But whether the inward light be conceived as proceeding from the action of the Spirit or the inhabitation of the Son,—whether it be conceived as the portion of all men, or as peculiar to the favourites of heaven, this is the general character of what we call fanaticism, that the inward light is understood to be a perfect guide to those who enjoy it, and the only guide which they are obliged to follow. Religion, with them, consists entirely of feeling, an inexpressible delight, which supersedes, or renders in a great measure insignificant, every thing external. It appears to them of little importance whether the understanding be informed, provided the heart be touched. They are more solicitous about the allegorical sense which the Scriptures may receive, than about the facts or reasonings contained in them. They consider Christ without, or the facts recorded in the history of his life, and the precepts delivered in his own discourses and the writings of his apostles, as furnishing a directory of a very inferior kind to Christ within them. They undervalue the ordinances of religion; they think it better patiently to wait for the illapse of the Spirit than to make any exertion of their own; and they rank the most punctual performance of the great duties of justice and benevolence very far below certain sentiments and emotions, by which they consider the Deity as manifesting himself to their souls, as vouchsafing of his special love a revelation not granted to other men, and as maintaining that communion with them

by which they are effectually called, separated from sinners, and made partakers of a divine nature.

This is fanaticism, the distinguishing feature of some societies both of ancient and of modern date, and some tincture of which may often be met with among those who belong to the established church. It is a very dangerous spirit, because it tends to substitute, in place of that clear, precise rule, which the word of God delivers to all, something which is undefined and unknown, something which, depending in a great measure upon bodily constitution, is very much what every man chooses to make it. It tends to beget presumption in men of warm imaginations, and the deepest despair in persons of feeble spirits and of constitutional melancholy. It nourishes arrogance, and a contempt of others; and it has often relaxed the obligations of morality, by holding forth an ideal perfection, a spiritual communion, an approach of the soul to God, as better than the calm and uniform performance of those things which are good and profitable to men.

It is of very great importance, that those who declare their assent to the Calvinistic system, and who are bound to make that system the rule of their public teaching, should not confound it with fanaticism, but should perceive the clear and strong line by which the two are discriminated. Calvinism adopts as one of its fundamental principles an immediate action of God upon the soul, and in this respect it appears to agree with fanaticism. But the distinction is this; that immediate action of God, upon which Calvinism proceeds, is such an action as restores the whole nature of man; not merely exciting sentiments and emotions but conveying light to his understanding, invigorating his powers of action, and calling forth into exercise all those principles which unite in forming the constitution of a reasonable and moral agent. This action is conceived to be so entirely the work of God, as to admit at the time of its being first exerted, of no co-operation from the being whose nature is restored; and hence the Calvinistic system stands in direct opposition to the Pelagian and Semi-Pelagian doctrine. But the very purpose of the action is to give, to the being who is restored, the capacity of co-operating in the production of an end; and that end is accomplished by various means which are ex-

hibited, that they may operate upon him according to the laws of his nature, and by various exertions which, being the effect of the restoration of his faculties through the grace imparted to him, have no worth or value except what they derive from that grace, but still are as much his own exertions, as if they had been performed by the original unassisted powers of his nature. In this kind of action there is no danger of delusion; no disjunction of emotion from knowledge, for the heart is addressed through the understanding; no encouragement to undervalue the word of God and the ordinances of religion, for these are the means by which the Spirit operates; no temptation to neglect the duties of morality, for these are the fruits of the Spirit. And thus Calvinism is manifestly discriminated from fanaticism, by the nature and the effects of that action which it represents the Father of Spirits as exerting upon the soul.

It is readily admitted by the Calvinists, that God may act upon the mind of man in what manner he pleases; and the account which they give of the conversion of those who are elected, but who by their situation are excluded from the outward means of conversion, discovers that in their opinion the sovereignty of divine grace is unlimited. For, as they hold that God, who in the ordinary course of his providence makes use of means, is free to work without, above, and against them at his pleasure; so they hold also that elect infants and other elect persons who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the word, "are regenerated by Christ through the Spirit, who worketh when and where and how he pleaseth." But while the Calvinists, according to their own principles, consider the Almighty as in no respect restrained by the means which he himself has appointed, they consider the use of outward means as the ordinary course of his procedure in converting those who are within their reach, as appointed with wisdom, and as deriving from his appointment an authority which renders it unwarrantable and presumptuous in any person to set up a private rule in preference to them. Accordingly, our Confession of Faith declares that nothing is at any time to be added to the Scriptures, whether by new revelations of the Spirit or traditions of men; and that the Supreme Judge, by which

all private spirits, all pretences to inward illumination, are to be examined, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scriptures.*

When we attend to the general strain of Scripture, to which we are directed as the judge by which all private spirits are to be examined, we find it opposite to fanaticism. In Scripture the words of truth and soberness are delivered; facts are related with minuteness; evidence is distinctly proposed; knowledge is conveyed to the understanding; ordinances are appointed for the benefit of all; precepts are given for the direction of all; and men are conducted as rational beings by the exercise of their own powers, to that temper of mind and those actions which are connected with salvation.

The general strain of Scripture is so opposite to fanaticism, that it appears at first sight to favour the Pelagian or Semi-Pelagian doctrine. We meet everywhere with commands, as if the being addressed were able to obey them; with counsels, as if nothing more than moral suasion were necessary to overcome his unwillingness; with various expressions of the connexion between his duty and his happiness, as if his everlasting condition depended upon his own exertions. These conclusions indeed are soon found to be too hasty, because we meet also with descriptions of his condition, which imply that he is of himself unable to do any thing, and with promises of a supernatural influence, which is represented as the only sufficient cause of his conversion. But we must not, in our zeal against Pelagianism, allow these descriptions and promises to drive us into fanaticism, for then we render the commands, the counsels, and the promises unmeaning. The true medium between the two extremes is that which the Calvinists endeavour to hold, when they consider a man who is regenerated by the grace of God, as restored to the full possession and the renewed exercise of all his faculties, to a state in which truth illuminates his mind, the influence of moral inducements is felt, the exercises of devotion conspire with education and moral discipline in refining his character, the worthiest objects engage his affections, the most honourable and useful employments fill up his

* Confession of Faith, i. 6, 10.

time, and he is led in a manner corresponding with his reasonable nature and with the condition assigned him in this world, to that happiness which is prepared for him in another.

The views which have been given are the best preservative against that spirit which we call fanaticism. For according to these views, that cordial acceptance of the Gospel remedy, which is known in theological language by the name of faith, although the fruit of the operation of the Holy Spirit is attained by the same rational procedure as any other abiding sentiment. The word of God, the ordinances of religion, the opportunities of information and improvement, habits of attention and docility, the dispositions of a good and honest heart, and the virtues of an active life, all have their proper value, and conspire in their place, under the direction of the Spirit of God from whom they proceed, to the effectual application of that remedy which his love has provided.

According to the Calvinistic system, the faith which is produced by the action of God upon the soul, is not a sudden impulse, a solitary act, a transient emotion, but a habit or permanent state of mind, proceeding upon many previous acts, and embracing many kindred dispositions. As it implies an exercise of the understanding illuminated by the Spirit of God, it supposes previous knowledge; a knowledge of the facts which constitute the history of our religion, of the arguments which constitute the evidence of it, of the doctrines and precepts which constitute the substance of it. Hence arises the propriety of that instruction continually addressed by the reading and preaching of the word to those in whom faith may be produced. Hence we condemn both the blind implicit faith, which the church of Rome requires by human authority from those whom she studies to keep in ignorance; and also that contempt of knowledge, and that entire dependence upon present emotions which are the characters of fanaticism. And in thus representing faith as a rational act, we follow the direction of our Lord, who commands Christians to "search the Scriptures;"* and the direction of Peter, who exhorts them to "be ready always to give an answer to every one that asketh a reason of the hope that is in them."†

* John v. 39. † 1 Pet. iii. 15.

On the other hand, it appears, from what has been stated, that a knowledge of the facts of our religion, and an assent upon evidence to its truth, is not the whole of faith. For the Gospel does not contain general propositions, which may be supposed to find at all times a ready admission into a speculative mind, and concerning which nothing more is required than to perceive that they are true; but its peculiar character being this, that it brings a remedy for the present state of moral evil, the mind, according to the view of human nature upon which the Calvinistic system proceeds, is not disposed to accept of the remedy until a change upon the will and the affections be produced by the Spirit of God. Hence faith stands opposed to the love of sin which produces an aversion to the remedy, to the love of the world which produces an indifference about it, to the pride and self-confidence which make it appear unnecessary; and faith implies what our Lord calls "a good and honest heart," humbleness of mind, poverty of spirit, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, all those moral dispositions, which lead us with cordiality and thankfulness to embrace that method of being delivered from the evils of sin which the Gospel reveals. Hence arises the propriety of the many exhortations to faith which the Scriptures contain, and which the preaching of the word continually enforces; hence, too, the propriety of representing faith in Christ as a duty, for the neglect of which men are justly condemned, while in other places it is called the gift of God. For as the exhortations to faith are one of the instruments employed in producing that change out of which it arises, so the want of those moral dispositions with which it is connected is a proof of that depravity of mind, which, from whatever cause it proceeds, is, to every intelligent being who observes it, an object of the highest moral disapprobation.

As the Greek word rendered faith, πιστις, is a general term, denoting in its primary meaning persuasion, or credit given to testimony, and admitting of various applications, it is not always used in Scripture in that precise and full sense which has now been stated. Divines are accustomed to enumerate four kinds of faith. 1. The faith of miracles, or that persuasion of the power of their master, and that immediate impulse which enabled many of the

first Christians to perform, in his name, works far exceeding human strength; a kind of faith, which is expressly declared in Scripture to have no natural connexion with moral qualifications, and to give no assurance of salvation. "Though I have all faith," says Paul, "so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing."* 2. Historical faith, or the assent given to truths, the evidence of which the understanding is unable to resist. So it is said that "the devils believe and tremble;"† and it is conceived that a man may be able to give the most distinct exposition of the arguments for Christianity, and the most satisfying solution of every objection, while in his will and affections he is an enemy to the cross of Christ. 3. Temporary faith, or those emotions of admiration, joy, and gratitude, and those purposes of obedience which are excited by the counsels or promises of Scripture, or by particular exhibitions of the grace of the Gospel. Of this kind is the faith described by our Lord in one part of his exposition of the parable of the sower; the faith of many who followed him, of whom it is said at some times that they believed, although their conduct discovers that they retained all their evil passions; and the faith of a great part of the hearers of the Gospel, who are not wholly unmoved by the calls which they receive, because the sentiments of human nature are not obliterated from their breasts, and yet upon whose conduct these calls do not appear to have any abiding influence. 4. Saving faith, which is considered by the Arminians as distinguished from temporary faith only by its duration. Faith, according to their system, originates in the favourable reception which the mind gives to the grace of God. When it is lost by a change upon the character of him in whom it was begun, it appears to be temporary; when it continues during the whole of his life, it appears to be saving. But the Calvinists are led by their principles to consider saving faith as of a different species from that which is temporary; as originating in the operation of the Spirit of God upon those in whom he carries his purpose into execution; as a principle which cannot be lost, and whose fruit endures to everlasting life. As it presupposes knowledge and assent

* 1 Cor. xiii. 3. † James ii. 19.

to the revelation of the Gospel, it has a respect to all the parts of that revelation; and as it implies a firm reliance upon the promises of God in general, it has a special regard to that declaration which is characteristical of the Gospel, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. "This saying," every one that believes in Christ to the saving of his soul accounts "faithful," *i. e.* deserving credit, "and worthy of all acceptation," *i. e.* deserving to be cordially and thankfully embraced. The acceptance of this saying has been often expressed by the following phrases, all of which derive some countenance from Scripture; resting upon Christ, laying hold of him, flying for refuge to him, coming to him, trusting in him, receiving him. From the poverty of language, all these expressions are figurative, and consequently liable to abuse. But provided the figure contained in them be not tortured, and provided it be always remembered in the use of them that faith in Christ does not omit any part of the revelation concerning him, but embraces his whole character, they may serve to mark with significancy and precision that state of mind and those sentiments which are the first fruit of the operation of the Spirit of God in the conversion of a sinner.

CHAP. II.

JUSTIFICATION.

Upon the condition of those in whom the operation of the Spirit produces saving faith, there is a change which in Scripture is called justification; and that notion of justification by faith which arises out of the Catholic opinion concerning the nature of the remedy, and the Calvinistic tenets concerning the extent and the application of it, may be thus shortly stated.

The sufferings of the Lord Jesus were endured in the stead of those whom God from eternity decreed to bring to salvation; their sins were imputed to him as their substitute, and he bore them in his body on the tree. In all that he suffered and did there was a merit, which the apostle, Rom. v. 18, calls ἐν δικαιωμα, one righteousness, and upon account of which he says, 1 Cor. i. 30, Χριστος ἐγενηθη ἡμιν δικαιοσυνη. When those for whom Christ suffered believe on him, this righteousness is imputed to them, *i. e.* counted as theirs in the judgment of God. Considered in themselves they are guilty and deserve to suffer, but by means of the imputation of this righteousness they are completely acquitted from the punishment due to their sins, because it was endured for them by the Lord Jesus, and they acquire a right to eternal life, because it was purchased for them by his obedience. According to the notion now stated justification is purely a forensic act, *i. e.* the act of a judge sitting in the forum, the place of judgment, in which the supreme ruler and judge, who is accountable to none, and who alone knows the manner in which the ends of his universal government can best be attained, reckons that which was done by the substitute in the same manner as if it had been done by those who believe in the substitute; and not upon account of

any thing done by them, but purely upon account of this gracious method of reckoning, grants them the full remission of their sins. In this forensic sense of the word we understand the apostle to say, Rom. iii. 26, that God is "the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus;" and Rom. iv. 5, that "to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness," or as in the 6th verse, "God imputeth," reckoneth to him, "righteousness without works."

This is the great doctrine of justification by faith, which was preached by all the first reformers, which they thought they derived from Scripture, and which they opposed with zeal and with success to the following tenets of the church of Rome, upon which a great part of the corruptions of that church appeared to them to rest.

In the doctrine of the church of Rome justification was considered not as a forensic act, altering the condition of those who believe, but as an infusion of righteousness into their souls, making them internally and personally just. It was in this way equivalent to what we call sanctification; and two things, which we consider as connected by an indissoluble bond, yet as totally distinct from one another, were confounded. By this confusion the remission of sins was understood to comprehend taking away the stain as well as the guilt of sin; and the merit of the sufferings and obedience of Christ was, in this sense, understood to be imputed or communicated to those, who believe that, by the merciful appointment of God, it procured that grace which renewed their hearts and made them conformable to the image of Christ; so that his righteousness was only the remote cause of their acceptance with God, but the immediate cause was their personal righteousness, or that likeness to him which is obtained through his mediation.

Further, while the reformers considered all sins that were past as completely forgiven upon account of the satisfaction of Christ, the church of Rome, which considered remission as grounded upon a removal of the pollution of sin, thought that a part of the punishment remains to be endured by the sinner; that the satisfaction of Christ, which alone is sufficient to deliver from future and eternal punishment those who are justified, is applied to their

souls and rendered effectual for that purpose by the calamities which God sends them in this life, by the penances to which they submit, or by the torments endured in that intermediate state, where they are supposed to undergo a purification before they enter into heaven. All acts of mortification and every kind of affliction were thus regarded as a satisfaction offered on our part to the justice of God, deriving indeed all its acceptableness in the sight of God from what Christ has done, but concurring with the merits of Christ in our justification.

From the place assigned to personal righteousness, and to personal suffering in our justification, flowed the grossest corruptions in the church of Rome. The first reformers, therefore, regarding these corruptions with indignation, wisely and boldly attacked them in their principle, by dwelling upon the doctrine of justification by faith. According to this doctrine, the righteousness of Christ is the only impulsive or meritorious cause of our being justified with God; faith is only the instrument by which this righteousness is applied to us so as to be counted as ours; and the effect of this imputation is a complete remission of the punishment, as well as of the guilt, of sin; so that all the calamities which they who are justified may be called to suffer, are fatherly chastisements, expressions of love, a salutary discipline ministering to their improvement, but in no respect a punishment or a satisfaction for sin.

Many of the sects into which the Protestants were afterwards divided, not being called immediately to combat the errors of popery, did not see the necessity of adhering to all the parts of this doctrine of the first reformers, and were led by the general principles of the systems which they adopted to depart from it more or less. The Socinians, who consider the Gospel merely as a declaration of the mercy of God, a lesson of righteousness, and a promise of eternal life, exclude the satisfaction of Christ altogether; and finding no necessity and no place for the imputation of his righteousness, they hold that, as all who repent are forgiven, so Christians are said to be justified by faith, or a reliance upon the promise which God has made to them through Christ, because this faith is the principle of that evangelical obedience, which, through the essential

goodness of God, will be crowned with eternal life. The Arminians, who retain the doctrine of the atonement, admit that the righteousness of Christ imputed to us is the only meritorious cause of our justification. But as this righteousness is imputed only to those who believe, and as faith, according to the Arminians, is the fruit of that favourable reception which the mind of him who believes is naturally disposed to give to the grace of God, faith is considered by them not merely as an instrument by which the righteousness of Christ is applied, but as an act implying the possession of that honesty of heart, and those good dispositions which, for the sake of Christ, are counted to us as righteousness. The Roman Catholics and the Arminians in this point agree; both ascribing to faith, not the merit of our justification, but that intrinsic value which is a preparation and predisposition for our being justified. They said, in the language of the schools, *fidem justificare dispositive;* that a man, by having faith, *suæ voluntatis motu præparari et disponi ad justificationis gratiam consequendam.* The Calvinists, on the other hand, considering all those dispositions, which go along with faith, as originating in the grace which is conferred by God, do not ascribe to them any co-operation with that grace in the act of justification; but as they read in Scripture that we are justified not διὰ τὴν πίστιν, but διὰ πίστεως, ἐκ πίστεως, so they say that faith justifies *organice, instrumentaliter;* and it appears to them that the very reason why our justification is ascribed to faith, and not to other Christian virtues, is, that while obedience, charity, and repentance, have an intrinsic merit, something independent of any object foreign to themselves, which might be regarded as the ground of our acceptance, faith in Christ, by its very nature, looks beyond itself, and, instead of presenting any thing of which the person who believes can boast, implies a reliance upon the merit of another: and this they understand to be the meaning of that expression of the Apostle, Rom. iv. 16, "It is of faith, that it might be by grace."

In the first paragraph of the eleventh chapter of the Confession of Faith, the doctrine of justification by faith is anxiously discriminated from all the errors which I have enumerated. And in the fourth paragraph of that chapter

there is an allusion to an inaccurate expression which occurs in the writings of some who held this doctrine. They said that men were justified from eternity; thus confounding the decree of election, which entered into the eternal counsels of the Almighty, with that part of the execution of the decree which we mean by the act of justification; an act which pre-supposes that faith which is the fruit of the Spirit, and therefore does not take place until faith be produced.

There is another mode of expression which is not a mere inaccuracy, but proceeds upon a different view of the whole subject. It is said by the Roman Catholics, and by many Protestants, that no man is completely justified till the last day, when he is delivered from all the effects of sin, and put in possession of eternal life. But as the Scripture often speaks of men being justified prior to that day, a distinction is made between first and second justification. The Roman Catholics mean by first justification, the infusion of personal righteousness by the Spirit of God into the soul: by second justification, the reward conferred at the last day upon the good works which flowed from this infusion. Among the Protestants the distinction between first and second justification was mentioned by some of the followers of Socinus, and has been ably and fully elucidated in a long essay prefixed to Taylor's Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, entitled, A Key to the Apostolic Writings. By first justification Taylor understands the admission of the Gentile nations by the publication of the Gospel into the church of God, in which they receive the promise of pardon through the blood of Christ, the hope of eternal life, and all the privileges which belong to the people of God: by second, or final justification, he understands our being actually qualified for, and put in possession of eternal life, after we have duly improved our first justification or Christian privileges, by a patient continuance in well-doing to the end. According to this distinction, which is generally adopted by those members of the church of England who lean to Arminianism, justification is divided into two parts, the one of which is an act of grace common to all that hear the Gospel, and the other is an exercise of distributive justice at the last day; and the connexion between the

two parts is so far from being infallible, that it depends entirely upon the exercise of our free will, and is dissolved with regard to many by their abuse of those privileges which others improve. But the Calvinists consider themselves as warranted by the whole strain of Scripture, to hold that the complete remission of all his past sins, implied in the justification of a sinner, is accompanied with a security that, by the same grace through which he was justified, he shall finally be saved. In the Calvinistic scheme, therefore, justification does not consist of two parts that may be disjoined, but is one act of God peculiar to the elect, which extends its benefits through the whole time of their abode upon earth, and is the ground of eternal life being adjudged to them at the last day.

To the implicit faith required in the church of Rome, and to the delusions of fanaticism, we have opposed this principle, that knowledge is essential to the faith by which we are justified. From this principle it follows, that none can be saved to whom the knowledge of Christ is not conveyed: and hence a question occurs concerning those men whose names are often mentioned in Scripture with honour, but who lived before our Saviour was born. We can have no doubt that they pleased God upon earth, and that they now dwell with him in heaven: but it is asked whether they had the means of attaining that knowledge, without which men cannot be justified by faith in Christ. The Socinians, who depreciate the services, the promises, and the precepts of the Old Testament, that they may find a marked superiority in the Gospel, without having recourse to the doctrine of atonement, consider the saints under the Old Testament as possessing advantages very little superior to those which good men enjoy under any other dispensation, as oppressed with a burdensome ritual, which did not appear to them to have any spiritual meaning, as having no encouragement to regard as their Saviour that prophet whom their sacred books foretold, and as attaining to eternal life, not through faith in him, but merely through the goodness of God. As the harmony of the divine works leads us to expect an intimate connexion between the two dispensations of religion, it may be presumed *a priori*, that there is some defect in this view of the condition of these men: and as in various departments

of the study of theology, there are striking analogies between the preparatory dispensation and that which was its completion, it can hardly be supposed that that method of deliverance from sin, which constitutes the character of the latter, was wholly unknown to those who were distinguished from the rest of the world by living under the former. It is true that neither the moral, nor the ceremonial, nor the judicial law, was of itself sufficient to lay a foundation for faith in Christ. But it is to be remembered that the dispensation, which embraced these three parts, was given to the posterity of that patriarch in whose family the promise of a deliverer was to descend; that it intervened between the promise and the fulfilment; that its subserviency to the fulfilment was explained by a succession of prophets, whose words cherished the hope of a deliverer, and unfolded the spiritual meaning of all the preparation that was made for his coming; and that many of the ceremonies which were continually repeated, while they represented the pollution and the guilt of sin, could not appear to any enlightened mind sufficient to remove them. Accordingly, we learn from various expressions in Scripture, that there were in all ages of the Jewish church just and devout men, who "waited for the consolation of Israel," who looked through the figures, that were for the time then present, to him who is the end of the law, who expected forgiveness of those breaches of the moral law, which they daily confessed, through the virtue of the new covenant that was announced to them, and who thus lived by the faith of a Saviour to come. John viii. 56. Rom. iii. 30. 1 Cor. x. 4. Gal. iii. 8, 9, 14. Luke ii. 25, 38.

To all who were thus enabled to look forward to Christ he was "the Lord their righteousness." For the blood of the Lamb, who was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, extends its efficacy to the ages that are past, as well as to those that are to come; and through him all that lived by faith under the Old Testament obtained full remission of sins, and a right to eternal life, of which they were put in possession immediately after death. With regard to them, therefore, our doctrine is thus expressed in the Confession of Faith; the means by which the covenant of grace was administered in the time of the law, "were for that time sufficient and efficacious, through the

operation of the Spirit, to instruct and build up the elect in faith in the promised Messiah; there are not two covenants of grace differing in substance, but one and the same under various dispensations; the justification of believers under the Old Testament was in all respects one and the same with the justification of believers under the New Testament."*

With regard to those in ancient times who knew nothing of the Jewish law, and those in modern times to whom the Gospel has not been published, we feel a greater difficulty, at least we do not find ourselves so far enabled by Scripture to explain in what manner they can be saved. For although it is impossible that they could attain by any ordinary means that knowledge which is essential to faith in Christ, yet it is contrary to what we account the fundamental principles of Christianity, to believe that their actions, however useful to society, and however highly esteemed by men, possessed such a degree of perfection as to entitle them to acceptance with God. But it does not necessarily follow from the principles which we hold, that all such persons are finally condemned, because we can conceive that God may in some extraordinary manner convey to the souls of those who are to be saved that knowledge which he did not afford them the outward means of acquiring: and we are disposed to consider Job as an instance of this kind presented to us in Scripture; a man who appears to have had no acquaintance with the Mosaic dispensation, and yet who attained such an eminence of virtue as is honoured with the divine approbation, and who discovers such an assured hope of a final deliverance from all the evils of sin, as implies that his soul was illuminated with more than human knowledge.† There are numberless ways in which the Father of spirits may extend the knowledge of Christ to all those whose names enter into the decree of election, whatever be the circumstances in which they are placed; and we need not be surprised that the Scriptures give no aid to our conjectures as to the time or the manner of their illumination. For it may be observed in general, that while we are fully

* Confession of Faith, vii. 5, 6; xi. 6.
† Job xix. 23—27. Confession of Faith, x. 3.

instructed in every thing which can serve to direct our conduct, we are kept in the dark as to every thing that may serve only to gratify our curiosity; and with regard to this particular point, it appears that the Scriptures give us no light, for this reason, that the condition and the fate of persons, who are not favoured with the outward means of knowing Christ, form no rule to us who enjoy them. Whatever extraordinary revelation the mercy of God may vouchsafe to men in a different situation, our advantages serve at once to point out our duty, and to set bounds to our expectations; and all that concerns our everlasting peace is couched in the spirit of those significant words, which our Lord puts into the mouth of Abraham as an answer to the request of the rich man, who asked that Lazarus might be sent from the other world to his father's house to testify to his five brethren; "they have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them."

It is obvious, from the view which has been given of the faith by which we are justified, that the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints necessarily results from the characteristical features of the Calvinistic system.* All the arguments for the doctrine, and all the answers to the objections against it which are to be found in the ordinary systems, are only the application of principles which have already been stated; and the Arminian and Calvinistic expositions of the multitude of texts, which have been quoted in the discussion of this question, turn upon distinctions and general views which have frequently occurred to us. For this reason, instead of entering minutely into a question which would only detain us with unnecessary repetitions, I shall pass on to other questions, where the application of general principles is less obvious.

If all those who are justified be effectually preserved by the Spirit of God, so that they cannot fall from a state of grace, their final salvation, being certain, is an object of knowledge. It is known to God, and it may be known by themselves. Accordingly, we meet in Scripture with such expressions as the following: "We know that we have passed from death unto life.† I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that

* Confession of Faith, xvii. 1. † 1 John iii. 14.

which I have committed unto him against that day. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day."* These, and other expressions of the same kind, imply that the apostle had a knowledge of his being to be saved. It follows, consequently, that a similar knowledge may be attained by other Christians. This is called, in theological language, an assurance of grace and salvation.†

The church of Rome deny that it is possible for any man in a state of trial to attain this assurance; and they build some of the most gainful parts of their traffic upon that perpetual doubt and uncertainty with regard to our final condition, which they profess in some degree to remove by the prayers of the church, the merits of saints and martyrs, and the absolution which priests pronounce in the name of God.

The Arminians, who do not ascribe the salvation of men to the infallible effectual operation of the Spirit of God, but consider it as at all times suspended upon the co-operation of the human will, do not suppose it possible for any man to attain a greater certainty of salvation than this, that if he persist in faith he shall be saved. It is the character of fanaticism to resolve this assurance into an impression immediately made by the Spirit of God upon the mind, overpowering the reason of man, and independent of his exertions. But the Calvinists conceive that an assurance with regard to his final condition, very far beyond conjecture or probable conclusion, may be attained by a Christian without any special revelation, in a manner consistent with the full exercise of his rational powers. In forming this conception, they are accustomed to distinguish between the direct and the reflex act of faith. By the direct act of faith they mean that cordial acceptance of the method of deliverance proposed in the Gospel, by which a believer rests in the merits of Christ for salvation. By the reflex act of faith they mean the consciousness of the direct act, the knowledge which he has that he believes; by which consciousness he is enabled to reason in

* 2 Tim. i. 12; iv. 7, 8. † Confession of Faith, xviii. 2.

this manner: the Scripture declares that whosoever believes in Christ shall obtain everlasting life; but I know that I believe in Christ, therefore I know that I shall obtain through him everlasting life.

This reflex act of faith, being subsequent to the direct act, is not essential to it; in other words, a person may believe in Christ, and may be justified by his faith, before he attain the assurance of his being in a justified state. In some this assurance is much weaker than in others; in all it is liable to be overcast and shaken by bodily infirmity, by their own negligence, by affliction, by temptation, by that visitation of God which the Scriptures call his hiding his face from his people, and by occasional transgression; and in all it is accompanied with watchfulness, with fear of offending, and with a diligent use of the various instruments which contribute to the preservation of human integrity. But as there are certain fruits which always proceed from genuine faith, these fruits afford an evidence of its being implanted in the soul; and this evidence is accompanied with what the Scripture calls the witness of the Spirit, "who is the earnest of our inheritance," because as the fruits of righteousness are the effect of his operation, he bears witness with the spirit of all who are filled with these fruits, that they are the children of God.* The consciousness of their possessing faith is the witness of their own spirit: the presence of his fruits is his witness; and the two conspire in producing that peace with God and joy in the Holy Ghost, of which the Scriptures often speak as a portion, which in value "passeth all understanding," and which, to all that attain it, is the foretaste and the beginning of heaven in their souls.

* Rom. viii. 16. Sherlock's Sermon on the text.

CHAP. III.

CONNEXION BETWEEN JUSTIFICATION AND SANCTIFICATION.

THE view given, in the preceding chapter, of the Calvinistic doctrine with regard to the assurance of grace and salvation, proceeds upon the supposition that there are certain fruits of the operation of the Spirit of God which always accompany genuine faith; in other words, that there is an inseparable connexion between justification and sanctification. This connexion, although, in respect of practice, the most important doctrine in theology, is not obvious at first sight; it has been overlooked or neglected by several sects of Christians; and therefore it requires to be fully illustrated in this place.

Although it is the fundamental and characteristical doctrine of the Gospel that we are justified by faith, yet a great deal more than that word seems to imply is required of Christians. The Epistles of Paul, in which the doctrine of justification by faith is unfolded and established, like all the other parts of Scripture, are full of precepts commanding us to repent of our past sins, to abstain from all appearance of evil, to abound in the work of the Lord. While we read that "to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, honour, and immortality, God will render eternal life," we read also that the wrath of God, which is revealed in the Gospel against all unrighteousness of men, will at length be executed upon every soul of man that doeth evil, and that without holi-

ness no man shall see the Lord.* The precepts contained in the discourses of our Lord, and the writings of his apostles, are the revealed will of God prescribing to Christians their duty. The duty which they delineate is what our reason and our heart approve; and it is so agreeable to all our conceptions of the nature and the government of God, that the Gospel, from the manner in which it delivers and enforces this duty, derives the high commendation of being the most effectual and the most refined system of morality which ever appeared. But where is the connexion, it is asked, between this system of morality and the doctrine which has been explained? If we are justified by faith alone, and if justification include the remission of sins and a right to eternal life, where shall we find a place for the precepts of the Gospel? And how can that obedience, which is certainly due to the will of our Creator, enter into a system of theology, which excludes works from having any share in our justification? The principles, upon which the Calvinistic system rests, appear to all who understand them to furnish a satisfying answer to these questions.

If faith were a single act, by performing which at one particular time we were justified, or if it were a solitary quality infused into the soul, and unconnected with the general character, there would be much difficulty in reconciling the necessity of obedience with the doctrine of justification by faith. But we have seen that faith arises from that change which the Spirit of God produces, according to the Calvinists by an efficacious operation, according to the Arminians by moral suasion, upon all those to whom the remedy is applied. Now this change is the beginning of sanctification, by introducing the principles of a new life, without which we cannot hate sin and follow after righteousness. For although many circumstances may induce men to assume the outward appearance of sanctity, nothing but the influence of that Spirit, which produces faith, can so effectually overcome the corruption of human nature as to produce that uniformity of sentiment, and purpose, and conduct, those habits of virtue, and that continual progress in goodness, which enter

* Rom. i. 18; ii. 6—9. Heb. xii. 14.

into the notion of sanctification. And thus justification, a forensic act which acquits those who believe from the guilt of sin, and sanctification, an inward change, by which the soul is delivered from the stain of sin, and gradually recovers its native purity and dignity, although distinct from one another, are inseparably joined, because the faith by which we are justified has its origin and principle in the change by which we are sanctified. Accordingly faith was formerly found in its nature to be connected with many good dispositions; and although we do not allow that these dispositions are in any respect the cause of our justification, or that they give faith any degree of merit in the sight of God, still we cannot deny that the connexion between them and faith is of such a kind, as renders it impossible for any person to have saving faith who is devoid of these dispositions. It is plain also, that as faith implies good dispositions, so it brings along with it the strongest incentives to obedience. The different parts of the revelation of the Gospel are fitted by their nature to have an influence upon the most perverse mind which assents to the truth of the revelation: but to a mind renewed by the grace of God this influence becomes commanding. A man who receives with joy and gratitude the discoveries of divine love made in the Gospel, who has an impression of the divine authority of its precepts, who relies on the promises of God, and who trembles at his threatenings, derives from faith, motives to obedience the most powerful and interesting; and his mind, restored by the influence of the Spirit to the state in which objects, appearing as they are, produce their full and proper effect, is formed to be led by these motives. To him, therefore, the moral law, originally written upon the heart, afterwards delivered to the children of Israel from Mount Sinai, and republished in the precepts of the Gospel, approves itself as reasonable and just and good; obedience to it becomes delightful; the dominion of sin is broken; the liberty of the children of God is a matter of experience; so that, according to the significant language used by Paul, "being made free from sin, and become the servant of God, he has his fruit unto holiness, and obeys from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered him."*

* Rom. vi. 17, 22.

From this intimate connexion between justification and sanctification, there result the following conclusions, which it is of infinite importance for all the ministers of the religion of Jesus clearly to apprehend, and firmly to retain.

1. We observe with what propriety and significancy it is said that good works are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith. Although they follow after justification, they are the marks by which we know that we are in a justified state; there can be no well-grounded assurance of grace and salvation to any person who is destitute of these marks; and therefore the great business of Christians, according to the direction of Peter, is "to give all diligence to make their calling and election sure," *i. e.* to attain the assurance of their being elected, by "adding to their faith" those things in which the elect are called to abound.*

2. We observe that a quaint phrase, which often occurs in theological writings, *fides sola justificat, sed non quæ est sola*,† is an attempt to express shortly and pointedly a distinction, which, when properly understood, enables us to reconcile the apostles Paul and James. Paul says, "that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law:"‡ James says, "that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only."§ The two declarations appear to be inconsistent; but a little attention to the train of argument removes the apparent contradiction. Paul is arguing against persons who said that justification came by the law; and the works of the law mean, in his argument, not only the observance of the ceremonial law, but that measure of obedience to the moral law which any person, by the powers of human nature in its present state, is able to yield. This measure being always imperfect, and yielded by those who, as sinners, are under a sentence of condemnation, cannot justify; and therefore a man is justified only by that faith which accepts the imputation of the obedience of another. But this faith is represented by the apostle as working by love; and his writings not only abound with precepts addressed to those who believe, but are very much employed in illustrating the connexion be-

* 2 Peter i. 5—11.
† Confession of Faith, xi. 2.
‡ Romans iii. 28.
§ James ii. 24.

tween faith and obedience to these precepts. Although, therefore, Paul excludes all works done before justification from having any influence in bringing us into that state, yet the faith, to which he ascribes our justification, is understood and explained by him to be accompanied with every Christian grace, and productive of good works. But the faith of which James speaks is described as a faith without works, which is dead being alone; a faith which the devils have: for he says that "they also believe and tremble;" and the apostle, combating probably some dangerous practical error of his time, declares that this kind of faith is of none avail; because the faith by which a person is justified must be shown and made perfect by works. And thus the two apostles mean the same thing. Although each states the subject in the light which his particular argument requires, yet their writings suggest a distinction by which they are reconciled; a distinction, to which we are obliged to have recourse in explaining other parts of Scripture,* between that faith, which, being alone, does not save us, and that faith fruitful in every virtue, by which we are justified.

3. We observe that the soundest Calvinists may say, without hesitation, that good works are necessary to salvation. The first reformers, whose great object was to establish, in opposition to the church of Rome, the doctrine of justification by faith, were afraid to adopt an expression which might seem to give countenance to the Popish doctrine of the merit of good works. Melancthon, indeed, maintained that they were necessary; but as he was known to have departed in various points from the doctrine held by Luther, this expression gave offence to many who adhered to that doctrine. Amsdorf, in the year 1552, went so far as to declare that good works were an impediment to salvation. Few are disposed to follow Amsdorf; but amongst unlearned people, who have been educated with rigid ideas of Calvinism, there exists a general prejudice against saying that good works are necessary. It is proper, therefore, to understand clearly that, while this expression may be misinterpreted, as if it implied that some

* Acts xvi. 30, 31. John xii. 42, 43.

good dispositions or good actions are required previous to justification, and are the cause of our being justified, there is a sound sense in which the whole strain of Scripture and the amount of the principles of Calvinism warrant us to say, that good works are essential to salvation; for none can be saved who have not that character which is produced by the Spirit of God in all that are justified, and none have that character in whom these unequivocal fruits of it do not appear.

4. We learn to guard against the errors of those who have received the names of Solifidians, Antinomians, and *fratres liberi spiritus*. The Solifidians probably meant nothing more than to exclude the merit of works in our justification. But their doctrine has often been so expressed, both in former times and in the present day, as to give countenance to an opinion that nothing more than faith is required of a Christian, and that he is saved by the solitary act of resting upon Christ. The Antinomians derive their name from appearing to institute an opposition between the moral law and the Gospel. There was a monstrous form in which Antinomianism appeared both before and after the Reformation, and which was revived in Britain amidst the extravagancies of the seventeenth century. It represented the elect as absolved from the obligation of the moral law, as at liberty to indulge their appetites without restraint, and to perform what actions they pleased without contracting any guilt, because, being in a justified state, it was impossible that any thing done by them could be displeasing to God. This horrible doctrine, from which the *fratres liberi spiritus*, in the 14th, 15th, and 16th centuries, derived their name, calls for the correction of the civil magistrate rather than for an answer by argument: and although this doctrine has been avowed by some who profess to hold the Calvinistic system of predestination, yet he must have a very false and imperfect conception of that system who cannot readily show how it may be separated from so gross an abuse.

There is a more temperate form of Antinomianism, according to which it is not pretended that men are absolved from the obligation of the moral law; but it is said that obedience to its precepts being purely the effect of the irresistible grace of God,—an effect which his grace will in-

fallibly produce in the elect, and which no human means can produce in any others, the inculcating these precepts in discourses to the people is unnecessary, and may be hurtful, by inspiring their minds with a false opinion that something may be done by them, whereas the unregenerate can do nothing, and God does every thing in the elect. The only business, therefore, of preaching, according to this system, is to exhibit the condition of men by nature, and to proclaim the riches of the divine love in the whole economy of the Gospel; leaving sinners to feel that conviction of guilt and misery which will be thus excited in their breasts, and saints to follow the operations of the grace communicated to them, and of the sentiments of gratitude and love which the display of that grace may cherish. This more temperate form of Antinomianism, which has at different periods pervaded all the Reformed churches, and which gave their character to the greater part of British sermons during the seventeenth century, was ably combated in England by Bishop Stillingfleet and Dr. Williams. The first example of a kind of preaching, proceeding upon different principles, was set by the profound and learned Dr. Barrow, in sermons abounding with excellent matter, but written in a rugged obscure style, and affecting a multiplicity of divisions more fitted to perplex and fatigue the memory, than to assist the comprehension of the whole subject. His matter was exhibited in a more popular form by the copious Dr. Tillotson, who, although to us he appears diffuse and verbose, deserves to be ranked very high in the class of preachers, because, while he attacked the Antinomians by argument, he was the first who gave amenity and interest to a species of public discourses opposite to that which he condemned in them. The example was followed and improved by a succession of English divines; early in the last century it found its way into Scotland; and the gradual extension of moral science, the refinement of taste, and an enlarged acquaintance with life and manners, have produced amongst us a style of preaching totally different from that which our forefathers practised. With certain descriptions of people there still remains so much of Antinomian principles as to produce a predilection for what they call evangelical, or Gospel preaching, as opposed to what they call

moral or legal preaching. But this distinction is losing its hold of the minds of the people in many parts of Scotland; and although discourses from the pulpit, approaching to the character of moral essays, are universally and justly disliked, there is a method of preaching morality which is far from being generally unpopular.

It may be thought, however, that the disrepute into which Antinomian preaching has begun to fall is owing to a departure from Calvinism; and there appears to be the more reason for this suspicion, that some of the sects, amongst whom that kind of preaching continues to prevail, profess the strictest adherence to Calvinism, that Tillotson and other early adversaries of Antinomianism were avowed Arminians, and that all the peculiar tenets of the Arminians lead them to press obedience, and to dwell more upon the duties than upon the doctrines of religion. But the principles which have been explained leave no room to suppose, that Calvinism is inconsistent with rational practical preaching; and as it is most desirable that the place which the Calvinistic system allows for this kind of preaching should be distinctly understood, I shall suggest, as the last conclusion which may be drawn from the view given of the connexion between justification and sanctification,

5. That as the Scriptures abound with precepts and exhortations, so it is the duty of those who preach the Gospel to "affirm constantly this faithful saying," and to imprint it upon the minds of their people, "that they who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works."* This duty may be performed in two ways, both of which ought occasionally to be employed. One of the peculiar doctrines of Christianity may be made the subject of discourse; and, after explaining it, as far as you are warranted by Scripture, you may illustrate its influence upon practice,—the obligations and the motives to holiness which arise from it. Or you may make one of the precepts of the Old or New Testament, or one of the examples held forth in Scripture, your subject; and, after pointing out the duty enjoined by the precept, or the lesson conveyed by the example, you may enforce it, by add-

* Titus iii. 8.

ing to all the considerations which reason, and prudence, and experience suggest, those most interesting arguments which the Gospel affords. In either way you conjoin evangelical and moral preaching; you follow the example of Christ and his apostles; and you minister most effectually to the instruction of those who hear you. If you omit all mention of the doctrines, the motives and the views of the Gospel, you become mere moralists; you neglect the advantages which the religion of Christ gives you for laying hold of the minds of men; and you may learn from the history of the heathen world, that such discourses, however sound in argument, however rich in imagery, however ornate in style, are little fitted to promote the reformation of mankind. But if, on the other hand, you fail to follow out the doctrines of the Gospel to those consequences which are always deduced from them in Scripture; if the pictures which you present, of the corruption of human nature and the efficacy of divine grace, tend to convey an impression that all exertions upon our part are unnecessary and unavailing; and if your discourses give any person occasion to think that saving faith may exist in the mind of him who continues in sin, you not only preach the Gospel in a manner for which the Scriptures give you no warrant, and do unspeakable injury to the people by unhinging all their moral ideas, but you depart from the principles of that system upon which you profess to build such discourses, and show that you have viewed it only on one side, without comprehending the connexion of its parts. For, although, in opposition to Pelagian and Semi-Pelagian errors, we hold that man is passive in his conversion, that the inclination of the soul to turn to God is the work of the Spirit, for which there are no preparatory dispositions originally and naturally belonging to the mind, until it be renewed by grace; yet we hold also, that when these dispositions are implanted, they seek for exercise as much as the propensities which are inseparable from our frame; that when the mind is renewed it delights in those employments which are congenial to the image after which it is created; that when our faculties are emancipated from bondage they use the liberty which is restored to them; that man, instead of being passive after his conversion, is directed by the Spirit in the exercise of

those powers of action which he has recovered, and that because "God worketh in him both to will and to do of his good pleasure, he worketh out his own salvation."*

To man thus restored, the precepts of the word of God are addressed. The obedience required of him is the obedience of faith, yielded in the strength which is given him, proceeding from the motives of the Gospel, and relying for acceptance upon the grace there exhibited. But all the methods which according to the constitution of his nature may be of use in exciting him to this obedience are occasionally employed in Scripture. All the springs of action in the human breast, gratitude, love, hope, fear, emulation, the desire of honour, natural affection, and enlarged philanthropy, are there touched, and from thence we derive our example and our warrant for that variety in the style of practical preaching, by which we may, with the blessing of God, arrest the attention and reach the hearts of our hearers.

Although, therefore, the ministers of the Gospel do not in every sermon lay down a system of theology, they are not to be supposed to have departed from the "form of sound words;" for that form admits of all the lessons of candour, justice, benevolence, temperance, piety, truth, and virtuous exertion; and of all the modes, historical, descriptive, argumentative, or pathetic, in which such lessons can be conveyed. Our discourses correspond to the design of preaching, when we inculcate these lessons in the method which appears to us most effectual for calling upon the people "not to receive the grace of God in vain," but "to stir up the gift of God which is in them:" and all who improve these lessons, so as to abound in the fruits of the Spirit, discover that they have felt that divine power, by which the disciples of Christ are created unto good works, and put forth the strength conveyed to their souls by him, "without whom they can do nothing," but "through whom they can do all things."

Fuller's Comparison of Calvinistic and Socinian Principles as to their moral tendency.

* Phil. ii. 12, 13.

CHAP. IV.

SANCTIFICATION.

THAT change of character, which is the effect of the operation of the Spirit, and the beginning of sanctification, is called conversion, because it turns men from the sentiments and habits which enter into our view when we speak of human nature as corrupt, to those sentiments and habits which are produced by the Holy Spirit. Hence it follows, that sanctification consists of two parts. In considering its nature, each of these demands our attention. The first part is that which we call repentance.

SECTION I.

REPENTANCE and faith are often conjoined in Scripture as necessary for the remission of sins; they originate in the same change of character, and they cannot be separated. For as the repentance of sinners cannot be accepted by the righteous Governor of the universe without the righteousness of Christ, which by faith is counted as theirs, so their faith is not such as gives them an interest in that righteousness, unless they forsake the sins which upon account of it are forgiven. We say, therefore, in the words of our Confession of Faith, that "repentance unto life is an evangelical grace, the doctrine whereof is to be preached by every minister of the Gospel, as well as that of faith in Christ."* In preaching it, there is frequent occasion to illustrate the following propositions. 1. Repentance

* Confession of Faith, xv. 1.

unto life proceeds upon the revelation made in the Gospel of the mercy of God and the mediation of Christ; because, unless with the Socinians we deny the necessity of the atonement, we must account the case of every sinner desperate without that revelation.* 2. Repentance unto life does not consist merely in a reformation of the outward conduct, or an abstinence from those open transgressions which subject men to inconvenience and reproach: but it arises out of a heart which is renewed, as is intimated by the term μετανοια, which the sacred writers use to denote it, and it implies a hatred of sin; because, unless with the Socinians we deny the corruption of human nature, we cannot account a change permanent or acceptable, when the principles which produced former transgressions remain unsubdued. 3. Repentance unto life does not rest in feelings of compunction and expressions of sorrow; because if the emotions excited by the recollection of the past are founded upon a change of mind, they must be accompanied with a solicitude, and a constant endeavour to abstain from those sins which gave them birth.

Some of the grossest errors and corruptions of the church of Rome respect the doctrine of repentance. According to the tenets avowed in the standards, and sanctioned by the practice of that church, repentance consists in three acts; confession of sins to the priest; contrition, or attrition; and satisfaction. 1. The practice of confessing their sins in private to the ministers of religion, which the church of Rome requires of Christians, is unauthorized by Scripture. We are there commanded to confess our sins to God; and in one place we are commanded to confess to one another our faults, *i. e.* the offences we have given to one another.† Persons guilty of notorious sins have, in all ages, according to directions left by Christ and his apostles, been excluded from the communion of the church. A desire of being re-admitted has led them to confess guilt in the presence of that society to whom they had given offence; and this voluntary confession, being accepted as a testimony of the sincerity of their repentance, has restored them to that communion from

* Psalm cxxx. 3. † James v. 16.

which they were excluded. Upon this kind of confession, which was at first voluntary, and available only for the purpose of relieving from ecclesiastical censures, the church of Rome grounded that private auricular confession, which it enjoins to all as necessary for their acceptance with God. The doctrine concerning repentance was thus made the occasion of flagrant abuse. Not only is auricular confession productive of much inconvenience to society, by giving the ministers of religion an undue and dangerous influence over the minds of the people in their most secret affairs; but it perverts their notions of the justification of a sinner, and it provides a method of quieting their consciences, which is so easy of access that it encourages them to sin with little fear. 2. If the word contrition means that sorrow for sin, which is connected with the hatred of it as a transgression of the divine law, and as rendering us odious to the Father of spirits, it is indeed indispensably required of every sinner, and it naturally produces a change of life; for as the apostle speaks, 2 Cor. vii. 10, "Godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation;" a text most significant and instructive in itself, and upon which there is a sermon by Bishop Sherlock, which may be of more use than any treatise that I know in giving a distinct and full conception of the nature of repentance. But the church of Rome, wishing it to be thought that they possess the power of imparting the benefits of repentance to persons who manifestly have not attained this godly sorrow, because they do not repent of their sins so as to forsake them, substitute as an alternative for contrition that sorrow, to which they give the name of attrition. By this they mean a sorrow which proceeds not from a sense of the evil of sin, but from the loss, the shame, or inconvenience of any kind, of which it has been the occasion. This sorrow may be expressed by words, by gestures, or by actions; and all these expressions of attrition, being considered by the church of Rome as parts of repentance, although they do not imply any change upon the mind of a sinner, and as conspiring with the two other parts of repentance to entitle him to receive absolution, make men easy under the consciousness of past sins, and form an inducement not to forsake these sins, but merely to exercise a little more prudence in the repe-

tition of them. 3. By satisfaction the church of Rome means such works as the following; the saying a prescribed number of prayers, the giving a certain portion of alms to the poor and of gifts to the church, the submitting to certain mortifications and penances, or the engaging in appointed hazards and toils; all which deeds being set over against the sins which were confessed, and for which attrition was expressed, are conceived to constitute a compensation, offered by us to God for the breach of his law, in consideration of which that breach is forgiven. This last part of repentance appears to all who hold the perfection of the sacrifice offered by Christ upon the cross to be most dishonourable to him, because it implies a necessity of our adding a personal atonement for sin to the "one offering by which he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." To all who entertain that opinion of our good works which I am by and by to state, it appears most presumptuous on our part; and, independently of any system of religious opinions, it plainly institutes a kind of traffic, which is most unseemly, which may be perverted to the worst purposes, and which totally unsettles the foundations of morality, by teaching that the performance of one duty is an excuse for the neglect of another.

In opposition to these errors and corruptions of the church of Rome, some of which may be traced in prejudices that still remain in the minds of the people of Scotland, we hold, and it is a great part of the business of our preaching to remind the people, that repentance, proceeding from a change of mind, and implying that sorrow which the Apostle calls godly, terminates not in certain formal acts which may be performed by any one, but in a change of life; that it is accepted by God, not as any compensation or atonement for the offences committed against him, but purely upon account of the merits of Christ; and that the only unequivocal marks of its being effectual for the remission of sins, or being what the Scripture calls repentance unto life, are to be sought for not in the impressions or emotions or resolutions with which it is accompanied, but in the solicitude with which men avoid the sins of which they profess to repent, and in the zeal and the care with which they study to practise the opposite virtues.

It is possible, indeed, that repentance may be sincere,

when there is no opportunity of exhibiting these marks: for it would be presumptuous in us to say, that the steps by which a criminal is conducted to his end are in no case the instruments which the Spirit of God employs in his conversion, or that sudden death, by cutting short the labour of virtue which had just been begun, blots the beginning of it out of the book of life. But it is very much our duty to warn the people of the folly, the guilt, and the danger of continuing in sin, and trusting to a late repentance: and although, when we are called to witness those professions of repentance, which are sometimes produced by the near approach of death, we naturally express our earnest wish that they may find acceptance with the Searcher of hearts, who alone can judge of their sincerity, yet we should beware of doing a very great injury to others, by encouraging those, who are leaving the world, to think that what is called the reflex act of faith is at that time a sufficient ground for assurance of salvation. When this reflex act is accompanied with the evidence which arises from the fruits of the Spirit, it is justified in the eyes of men; and the soul by which it is exerted, being sealed by the Spirit, may rise to what the Scripture calls "joy in the Holy Ghost." But fanaticism opens a door to extreme licentiousness of morals, when it teaches that the high privilege, sometimes attained by those who have persevered in well-doing, is instantaneously and certainly conferred upon the man, who, being awakened at the close of a sinful life, by considerations and views that were strange to him, either says or thinks that he believes.

Some questions concerning repentance will find a place afterwards. But there is one other error respecting the nature of it, which should be mentioned here, and which results directly from the principles of fanaticism.

It has been thought that Christians may be able to tell the precise time of their conversion. It has sometimes been judged proper to require from them such a declaration; and there are certain exercises of the soul, implying great dejection and agitation and self-reproach, and known in books, more frequently read in former times than now, by the name of a law-work, which it has been supposed necessary for every person to experience, upon whom the Spirit of God produces a change of character. All these

views proceed upon the supposition that the operation of the Spirit of God is instantaneous, discriminated by some sensible marks from the natural workings of the human mind, and observing in all cases a certain known, discernible progress. But we found formerly that this supposition receives no countenance from the general strain of Scripture, that the words of our Lord, in his conversation with Nicodemus, (John iii. 8,) seem intended to teach us that the operations of the Spirit are known only by their fruits, and that as to the manner in which these fruits are produced, "the kingdom of God, which is within us," often "cometh not with observation." If the whole man be renewed by the grace of God, all the actions performed in consequence of this renovation will appear to be as much the actions of the man, as if the Spirit of God had not produced any change; if the change be accomplished by means, by a gradual preparation, and a gentle progress, it may be impossible to tell the time when it commenced, or to mark all its stages; and if, in some cases, the means are a pious education, or a succession of improving objects and of virtuous employments, continued from infancy to manhood, this favourable situation may restrain the corruption of the human heart from atrocious crimes, or presumptuous sins. But as it is repugnant to common sense, and to our sentiments with regard to human conduct, to say that all men are equally wicked, or all sins equally heinous, it appears absurd to suppose that those whose conduct has been widely different ought to feel the same remorse; and therefore, although the best men are always the most sensible of their own infirmities, and although human virtue cannot be so perfect as to exclude humility, self-abasement, and the need of repentance, yet it is reasonable to think that the manner of repentance, both the inward sentiments and the outward expressions, will vary according to the measure and the aggravation of those sins which men forsake. Hence we may draw two inferences, which I shall barely mention; that those discourses do not serve a good purpose, which represent it as indispensably necessary for all who repent to feel the same remorse; and that a doctrine, which has sometimes been avowed by Calvinists, but has oftener been imputed to them by those who wish

to hold forth their tenets to public scorn, is totally groundless; the doctrine, namely, that those who have been the greatest sinners are likely to become the most eminent saints.

SECTION II.

THE second part of sanctification is conjoined with repentance in numberless passages of Scripture. "Depart from evil and do good.—Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.—That ye put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man which is corrupt, and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.—Likewise reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."*

Sanctification, then, means a new life, the production of a habit of righteousness, as well as an aversion from sin; and this habit of righteousness appears in those good works which the precepts of the Gospel require, unto which, it is said, we are created,† and which all that believe in God are commanded to be careful to maintain.‡

When we say that the precepts of the Gospel declare what those good works are, we do not mean that the Gospel has given a new law unconnected with every former intimation of the will of the Creator. For the moral law, being founded in the nature of God and the nature of man, does not, like the ceremonial or the judicial law, admit of being abrogated. It is in all situations binding, upon that creature to whom it is made, by the constitution of his own mind; and although the duty of man may be unfolded in succeeding revelations with greater clearness, and directions may be delivered suited to the particular circumstances in which the revelations were given, yet the same general principles of morality must pervade

* Psalm xxxiv. 14. Titus ii. 11, 12. Ephes. iv. 22 24. Rom. vi. 11. † Ephes. ii. 10. ‡ Titus iii. 8.

every system of duty, which proceeds from the righteous Governor of the universe for the regulation of the conduct of man.

From this view of the immutability of the moral law we deduce a satisfying answer to the Antinomians, who say that Christians are released from its obligation. For upon this ground we are able to show that, although "Christians are not under the law, but under grace," in this sense, that they are not justified with God by their obedience to the moral law, they are as much bound to obey it as if another method of justification had not been revealed to them. Hence also we deduce the excellence of Christian morality, as a matter not of mere positive institution, but of everlasting obligation: and in discoursing of any particular Christian duty, we scruple not to avail ourselves of all those views of the beauty, the utility, and fitness of virtue, exhibited by heathen moralists, which serve to illustrate its conformity to our constitution and circumstances, while we superadd those interesting motives which arise out of the genius and spirit of the Gospel. Hence also we deduce the perfect consistency between the precepts of the Old and the New Testament. It is upon this ground we stand, when we refuse to admit with the Socinians that Christ has added any thing to that moral law of which he is the interpreter; and we think that, by the aid of those commentaries upon the ten commandments, which are scattered through his discourses, and the writings of his apostles, we are able to show that all the branches of Christian morality are included in the Decalogue. In the ordinary systems of theology, and above all in Calvin's Institutes, there is an explication of the Decalogue, which merits the particular attention of those whose business it is to instruct the people. Calvin's Commentary on this subject not only presents a short picture of the whole summary of our duty, but also deduces all the branches of it from general principles, so as to illustrate the connexion, the obligation, and the relative importance of the several parts of morality.

The precepts of the Gospel, thus considered not as the extension, but as the interpretation of the moral law, are the directory of a Christian; and in this directory is to

be sought a solution of all the questions that can occur in what may be called Christian Casuistry. Although discourses from the pulpit ought always to present to the people both the doctrines and the duties of religion in the most unembarrassed form, yet as the discussion of controverted points of doctrine engages the attention of men of speculation in theology, so casuistry, which is the application of the general rules of morality to particular cases, finds a place in those books which profess to treat accurately of the duties of a Christian, and has at different periods furnished subjects of debate, which have been very keenly agitated. At some times Christian casuistry has descended to insignificant attempts to regulate our dress, the measure of our food, our sleep, and our amusement; intruding into many branches of the general conduct of life, where every man claims a degree of liberty, and where particular directions can be of no use, because what is right in one person is wrong in another;—because it is impossible to frame rules for every variety of circumstances,—and because the best of all rules are to be found in those considerations of propriety and benevolence, which a sound understanding and a good heart will not fail to suggest upon every occasion. At other times, Christian casuistry has turned upon general questions, suggested by scruples that were founded upon a literal interpretation of particular texts of Scripture. Such are the doubts entertained by the Quakers, and some other sects, whether a Christian is allowed by the laws of his religion to engage in war, to take an oath in a court of justice, or to exercise the office of a magistrate. At other times, Christian casuistry has reached the very foundations of morality; turning upon questions which did not arise from the scruples of those who were afraid of doing wrong, but from the presumption of men, who, wishing to shake off the restraints of the divine law, without openly denying its authority, were ingenious in devising evasions and subterfuges, by which the precepts of the Gospel are accommodated to their corruption. Such are the questions, whether actions, in themselves evil and contrary to the precepts of the Gospel, become lawful and meritorious, when they are performed with a good intention, and for a good end; whether a person avoids the

guilt of perjury by a mental reservation at the time when he swears; and other questions of the same kind, to which the attention of the Christian world was directed by that loose system of morality, which the order of Jesuits invented and defended, and which, if it prevailed universally, would annihilate mutual confidence, and dissolve the bonds of society.

All the questions that can occur in these three kinds of casuistry are easily decided, when an enlightened and upright mind applies, with a due exercise of attention, the principles furnished by considering the precepts of the Gospel as the interpretation of that moral law, which is binding upon men in all situations. For the precepts of the Gospel, considered in this light, will be found to mark, with a precision sufficient for the direction of life, the outlines of that conduct which is characteristical of a Christian;—a conduct which shines before men without affectation, which is guarded without being austere, which is beneficent without being officious, and in which piety, righteousness, goodness, and temperance, are blended together with nice proportion, and with perfect harmony. This is the conduct which the precepts of the Gospel, and the life of Jesus, conspire in teaching, which it is the business of the ministers of religion in their discourses to delineate and recommend, and of which they should ever be careful to show an example corresponding to the delineation which they give.

The same principle, which furnishes a solution of all the cases that can occur in Christian casuistry, exposes the falsehood of a doctrine of the church of Rome respecting the nature of good works, which has laid the foundation of many gross corruptions. It was held that there are in the Gospel counsels of perfection; *i. e.* that besides precepts which are binding upon all, and which none can disobey without sin, there are advices given, which men are at liberty to neglect if they please, but a compliance with which constitutes a superior degree of perfection. The counsels of perfection are generally reduced to three; voluntary poverty,—a vow of perpetual chastity,—and a vow of what is called regular obedience. The first is founded chiefly upon the command addressed by our Lord to the young man who came to him, "If thou wilt be per-

fect, go and sell that thou hast." The second is founded upon some expressions in the Epistles of Paul. The third, the vow of that kind of obedience which is yielded by those who lead a monastic life to the superiors of their order, is founded upon the mention made in the Epistles of the reverence and obedience due to spiritual governors. Into the particulars of this branch of the Popish controversy it is unnecessary to enter. Sound criticism easily gives such an explication of the passages to which I have alluded, as withdraws the support which the distinction between precepts and counsels in matters of morality appears to derive from Scripture; and that distinction is completely overturned by all our conceptions of the law of God, and particularly by our considering the precepts of the Gospel as the complete directory of the conduct of a Christian. It is not meant, by using that expression, that they extend to those matters of indifference in which a man may be safely left at liberty, or that they supersede the exercise of prudence at those times, when he may innocently accommodate his actions to his situation. It is allowed that the duties of men vary according to their circumstances, that all have not the same opportunities of doing good, and that some are called, by the talents which are committed to them, and the advantages which they enjoy, to make greater exertions than others. But, from the principle which has been illustrated, this consequence clearly results, that every man is bound to embrace all the opportunities of doing good which his situation affords, because, according to that principle, the service of his whole life, and the full exertion of all his faculties, are due to his Creator. Every counsel, therefore, of the divine word respecting moral duty is a command; and "to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." But a man ought to be certain that what he does is good; for if, in place of what his situation marks out to be his duty, he substitutes actions which in his imagination appear to imply a higher degree of virtue, he is so far from attaining perfection by this substitution, that his conduct may be very sinful. He is guilty of neglecting what he ought to have done; a neglect which is always faulty, and which in some situations is both highly criminal and most hurtful to society. By this substitution also he entangles

himself in difficulties, perhaps beyond his strength; and, after all his mortifications and exertions, he has no warrant to think that a service which was not required at his hand, but which was the result of his own presumption, will be accepted by his Creator.

For these reasons it appears to Protestants, that the self-denial and abstemiousness of the monastic life, the voluntary poverty of the mendicant friars, the celibacy of the clergy, the multitude of prayers which many make it the business of their lives to offer, the pilgrimages which have often been undertaken, the large donations which have been left to the church, and the hard services which have been performed at her command, have not that supereminent excellence which is ascribed to them in the church of Rome. It appears to Protestants, that as these good works are not commanded by the precepts of the Gospel, which are the complete directory of the conduct of a Christian, they cannot be imposed upon any as a part of their duty to God; and that the performing them ultroneously, far from coming up to that refined and spiritual morality, by the practice of which Christians are commanded to do more than others, is an effort after an ideal and false perfection, which withdraws men from the duties they are called to perform, which diverts the powers of human nature and the bounties of Providence from the purposes for which they were bestowed, and which tends to destroy the essence of morality, by leading men to rest in the splendour of external actions, instead of cultivating those virtues of the heart out of which are the issues of a good life.

From the doctrine of justification by faith, Protestants easily deduce a refutation of other opinions of the church of Rome, concerning the merit of good works. The schoolmen in that church spoke of *meritum de congruo*, and *meritum de condigno*. By *meritum de congruo*, they meant the value of good works and good dispositions previous to justification, which it was fit or congruous for God to reward by infusing his grace. To this kind of merit the whole of the Calvinistic doctrine concerning justification by faith is directly opposed. By *meritum de condigno*, they meant the value of good works performed after justification in consequence of the grace then infused. These,

although performed by the grace of God, were conceived to have that intrinsic worth which merits a reward, and to which eternal life is as much due, as a wage is to the servant by whom it is earned. In opposition to this kind of merit, Protestants hold that as every thing which we can do is our bounden duty and is not profitable to God, our good works cannot, in a proper sense of the word merit, deserve a recompense from him; that although the good works commanded in Scripture, and produced by the influence of the Spirit, give the person who maintains them a real excellence of character, by which he is superior to others, by which he is "acceptable to God, and approved of men," and in respect of which he is styled in Scripture worthy, they do not constitute a right to claim any thing from God as a reward; that the expression frequent in Scripture, "God will render to every man according to his deeds," implies that good works are a preparation for heaven, or an indispensable qualification for the promised reward, and that there shall be a proportion between the virtuous exertion here and the measure of the reward conferred hereafter; but that good works are not in any respect the procuring cause of the reward. For the reward is represented "as of grace, not of debt," flowing from the promise of God upon account of the merits of his Son; and while death is called "the wages of sin," Rom. vi. 23, eternal life is said, in the very same verse, to be "the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

The Church of Rome did not rest in saying that our good works may merit eternal life. As they supposed that there are in Scripture counsels of perfection, a compliance with which constitutes a supereminent excellence of character, they inferred that those who attained this excellence did more than merit eternal life for themselves. To the actions by which men choose to follow these counsels of perfection, they gave the name of works of supererogation. They supposed that, by the communion which subsists amongst all Christians, the benefit of works of supererogation performed by some is imparted to others; and in the progress of the corruptions of that church, it was taught and believed, that the whole stock of superfluous merit, arising out of the good works of those who comply with the counsels of perfection, is committed to the

management of the Pope, to be parcelled out according to his pleasure, in such dispensations and indulgences as the sins or infirmities of other members of the church appear to him to stand in need of. It is sufficient for the refutation of these tenets in this place to mention them. Notwithstanding the preparation of ages, by which the minds of men had been conducted to these articles of faith, and the various interests which were concerned in their being retained, the enormous abuses of that discretionary power with which they invested the Pope were the immediate cause of the Reformation: and although the change then introduced into the religious system of a great part of Christendom was accompanied with much enthusiasm and violent mental agitation, yet the principles upon which it proceeded approve themselves to the understanding of every sober inquirer, who follows out through its several branches, the great doctrine held by the first reformers of justification by faith. For, according to that doctrine, the pardon of sin and our right to eternal life are entirely owing to the merits of Christ, which are counted as ours, in consequence of our possessing that faith which produces such good works as the law of God commands; so that although good works are essential to our own salvation, they are not the meritorious cause of it; and although our good works may minister to the comfort and improvement of others upon earth, "none of us can by any means redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him."

It would be an additional refutation of the merit of good works, and would demonstrate the impossibility of works of supererogation, if it could be shown that even a person who is justified cannot yield a perfect obedience to the commands of God. For, in that case, however splendid some of his actions might be, the sin and the consequent guilt which adhere to others, would take away from his whole character every claim of right to a reward. Accordingly there yet remains one question with regard to good works, which requires to be stated more fully than any of the preceding, upon account of the principles that are involved in the discussion, and the consequences that flow from it. The question is, whether it is possible that the good works of Christians can be free

from every mixture of sin; or, to speak in theological language, whether the sanctification of the elect is in this life complete.

SECTION III.

It was the principle of a fanatical sect, which arose early after the Reformation, and was known from a particular circumstance in their practice by the name of Anabaptists, that the visible church of Christ consists of saints, or persons free from every kind of sin. The doctrine taught by Munzer, the founder of this sect, resulted entirely from this principle; and his enthusiasm prevented him from perceiving that such a church is not to be found upon earth. Several modern sects, which have arisen out of the ancient Anabaptists, have been instructed by reason, by Scripture and by experience, to accommodate their principles to the present state of human nature. But, while they admit that many members of the church sin, repent and are forgiven, they contend that it is possible to attain that degree of perfection in which men are exempt from sinning, and they mean to insinuate that this degree of perfection is often found in their society.

This presumption, which in all fanatical sects has its foundation in the confidence of their being under the immediate direction of the Spirit, is generally cherished by their holding some form of the Synergistical doctrine. Pelagians and Socinians, who do not admit that the powers of human nature were injured by the fall, readily conclude that every man is as able to obey the commands of God, as Adam was immediately after his creation; that he who abstains from one sin may abstain from all; and that perfect innocence is thus attainable by a proper exercise of our own faculties. And all who hold that modification of these tenets, which is called Semi-Pelagianism, consider the corruption of human nature as neither so inveterate nor so universal, but that in some persons the influence of the Spirit being favourably received, and finding a co-operation of all their powers, may, by the continuance of a proper attention on their part, be rendered so effectual

for their sanctification as to preserve them from every thing sinful.

Accordingly, it is the doctrine of a great part of the church of Rome, of the Franciscans, and the Jesuits or Molinists, that perfection is attainable in this life. In order to reconcile this position with those defects and errors which have been observed in the lives of the best men that ever lived, they make a distinction between mortal and venial sins. By mortal sins, they understand actions which are so flagrant a transgression of the law of God, and imply such deliberate wickedness, as to deserve final condemnation; and from these they consider every man, into whom the grace of God has been infused at his first justification, as completely preserved. By venial sins, they understand both those sudden emotions of passion and inordinate desire, which, so long as they are restrained from going forth into action, are regarded by them as the constitutional infirmities of human nature; and also those actions, which, although contrary to the letter of the law, are in themselves a trifling transgression, or are attended with circumstances alleviating the fault and indicating good intention. It was meant by calling such sins venial, either that they deserve no punishment at all, or that they are completely expiated by temporal sufferings, so as not to be remembered in the judgment of the last day; and it was understood, that when the sins of this kind, into which it is admitted a saint may fall, are set over against his uninterrupted obedience to all the great commandments of the law and the supereminent excellence of his good works, his character, upon the whole, is entitled to be accounted perfect.

On the other hand, the Dominicans and Jansenists learned, from the doctrine of Augustine concerning the corruption of human nature and the measure of divine grace, to hold the following position, which is absolutely inconsistent with the perfection of good works; "that there are divine precepts which good men, notwithstanding their desire to observe them, are nevertheless absolutely unable to obey; nor has God given them the measure of grace that is essentially necessary to render them capable of such obedience." This is one of the five propositions contained in the book entitled Augustinus, which

was often condemned in the seventeenth century by the Popes. Jansenius, the author of that book, who meant to give a faithful picture of the sentiments of Augustine, derived this proposition from the writings of that father; and, in like manner, all those Protestants who hold that system which Calvin also learned from Augustine, not only say that perfection is not in fact attained in this life, but say farther that it cannot be attained, and that it is part of the economy of the Gospel, that sanctification, although it originates in the operation of the Spirit of God, continues to be incomplete. Thus the Church of England maintains, in the twelfth Article, "good works, which are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification, cannot put away our sins and endure the severity of God's judgment:" in the fifteenth Article, "all we, although baptized and born again in Christ, yet offend in many things;" and in the sixteenth Article, "they are to be condemned which say they can no more sin as long as they live here." In like manner our Confession of Faith declares, chap. xiii. 2, "Sanctification is throughout in the whole man; yet imperfect in this life, there abiding still some remnants of corruption in every part;" and chap. xvi. 6, 7, "Our best works as they are wrought by us are defiled and mixed with so much weakness and imperfection, that they cannot endure the severity of God's judgment. Yet, notwithstanding the persons of believers being accepted through Christ, their good works also are accepted in him, not as though they were in this life wholly unblameable and unreprovable in God's sight, but that he, looking upon them in his Son, is pleased to accept and reward that which is sincere, although accompanied with many weaknesses and imperfections."

This doctrine of the imperfection of sanctification in this life, which the two established churches of this island thus manifestly agree in holding, rests upon such grounds as the following. The Scriptures, while they declare that "in many things we offend all," give no countenance to the dangerous distinction between venial and mortal sins. But although they represent sins as of different magnitudes and deserving different degrees of punishment, they also represent every transgression of the law of God as implying that guilt by which the transgressor is under a

sentence of condemnation; and they apply the name of sin to inordinate desire even before it is carried forth into action, and uniformly describe it as offensive to God.

Further, they hold it forth as the distinguishing and peculiar character of the man Christ Jesus, that he was without sin, and they record many grievous sins committed by those, whom, from the manner in which they are spoken of in other places, we are led to consider as having been justified with God.

Further, there are in the New Testament descriptions of a continued struggle between the Spirit, which is the principle of sanctification, and the corruption of human nature, by which that principle is opposed. The most striking passage of this kind is to be found in Romans vii. Calvinists generally consider the apostle as there speaking, in his own person, of a man who has been regenerated by the grace of God. In this case his expressions mark very strongly the corruption that remains in the hearts of the best men. Other Christians, who deny, or who wish to extenuate this corruption, consider him as speaking in the person of a man who has not partaken of the grace of God; in which case his expressions mark either the combat between appetite and reason which all moral writers describe, or the compunction and self-reproach of a man who is struggling by the mere powers of his own nature to disentangle himself from habits of vice. The true interpretation of the passage must be gathered by a careful study of the writings of Paul, and by the help of the best commentators. There are other passages in his Epistles, where the same struggle which the Calvinists suppose to be meant in Romans vii. seems to be described. Of this kind is the following: Gal. v. 17, "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." It appears, too, that the general strain of Scripture,—the image of a warfare under which it describes the Christian life,—the fear and circumspection which it enjoins, and the daily prayer for forgiveness which our Lord directs his followers to present, all favour the Calvinistic doctrine respecting the imperfection of sanctification. To these arguments from Scripture it may be added, that this doctrine corresponds with the cir-

cumstances of man in a present state, where he is surrounded with temptations to evil, and retains, in a greater or less degree, a propensity to yield to them; and that it is unquestionably agreeable to the experience of the best people, who not only feel many infirmities, but who are accustomed to acknowledge that, after all their exertions, they fall very far short of what they are in duty bound to do, and that, with all their circumspection and vigilance, they often commit sins for which they have need of repentance.

To a doctrine thus supported by Scripture and experience, it is not enough to oppose, as the advocates for the perfection of the saints are wont to do, reasonings drawn from the power and the holiness of God, from the intention of the death of Christ, or from the gift of the Spirit. Far from presuming upon these reasonings, that a full participation of the benefits of the Gospel will in this life overcome the corruptions of human nature so entirely as to leave no remainders of sin, it becomes us to correct our conjectures with regard to the effect of the operation of God by the declarations of his word, and by the measure in which that effect is experienced by his people. Since these two rules of judging are, upon this point, in perfect concert, every passage of Scripture, which appears to contradict the doctrine which they unite in establishing, must receive such an interpretation as shall render Scripture consistent with itself; and every branch of the Calvinistic system must be held with such qualifications as this doctrine renders necessary. When we read, therefore, 1 John iii. 9, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God," we understand the apostle to mean, not that sin is never committed by those who are born of God; for we find him expressing himself thus, 1 John i. 8, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us;" but that whosoever is born of God is not an habitual sinner, or cannot obstinately persist in committing sin. When we meet with exhortations to perfection,—when we find the word perfect introduced into some of the characters drawn in Scripture,—when we read of persons "walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless," we understand a comparative perfection to be spoken of,

sincerity of obedience, hatred of every kind of sin; what the Scripture often mentions along with perfection as equivalent to it, an upright and zealous endeavour to conform in all things to the law of God; what is called by divines a perfection of parts, although not of degrees. When we speak of the perseverance of the saints, we mean, not an uniform unsinning obedience, but the continual operation of the principles communicated to their souls, and always abiding there, by which they are certainly recovered from the sins into which they are betrayed, and are enabled, amidst all their weaknesses and imperfections, to "grow in grace." And we allow that the assurance of grace and salvation is very much interrupted by the sins, of which the best men are occasionally guilty.

As all the parts of the Calvinistic system are intimately connected with one another, so the doctrine which we are now illustrating is essentially necessary in order to our holding the two doctrines last mentioned, the perseverance of the saints, and the assurance of grace and salvation. For as it an unquestionable fact that all men sin, unless it be admitted that sanctification is in this life incomplete, it will follow either that there are none upon earth who ever partook of the grace of God, which is to deny the existence of the church of Christ, or that those who have been sanctified repeatedly fall from a state of grace, and never can have any assurance of their final salvation. But if the doctrine of the imperfection of sanctification be admitted, there is no impossibility in holding the two others. At the same time it must be acknowledged, that the part of the Calvinistic system, which is the most liable to abuse, is the connexion between these three doctrines: and there is no subject upon which the ministers of the Gospel are called to exercise so much caution, both in their public discourses and in their private intercourse with the people. Many are disposed to solace themselves under the consciousness of their own sins, by the recollection of those into which good men have formerly fallen, and by a confidence that, as sanctification is always imperfect, they may be amongst the number of the elect, although their lives continue to be stained with gross transgressions. It is not by holding forth ideal pictures of human perfection, that this dangerous error is to be counteracted; for this is

encouraging the indolence of those who entertain it, by confirming them in the belief that it is impossible for them to do what is required. It must be met by imprinting upon the minds of our hearers such important truths as the following: that the remainder of corruption which God sees meet to leave in the best, while it serves to correct the deep despair which in some constitutions accompanies religious melancholy, is to all a lesson of humility and watchfulness; that they, who, from experience of this corruption, or from the sins which it produces in others, take encouragement to persist in deliberate and wilful transgression, discover a depravity of heart which indicates that no saving change has been wrought upon their character; that the repentance, which we are called to exercise for our daily offences, implies a desire and an endeavour to abstain from sin; that those aspirations after a state where the spirits of the just shall be made perfect, which are quickened by the consciousness of our present infirmities, cannot be sincere without the most vigorous efforts to acquire the sentiments and habits which are the natural preparation for that state; that although none are in this life faultless, yet some approach much nearer to the standard of excellence held forth in the Gospel than others; and that it is the duty of all, by continued improvements in goodness, to go on to perfection.

These views, all of which are clearly warranted by Scripture, guard against the abuse which I mentioned; and that imperfect but progressive sanctification, which is the work of the Spirit, opens the true nature of Christian morality—of that evangelical perfection which all the discoveries of the Gospel tend to form, and which through the grace of the Gospel is accepted of God and crowned with an everlasting reward. Christian morality has its foundation laid in humility. It excludes presumption, and self-confidence, and claims of merit. It implies continual vigilance and solicitude. Yet it is a morality free from gloom and despair; because it is connected with a dependence upon that Almighty power, and a confidence in that exuberant goodness, which furnish the true remedy for the present weakness of human nature. It is a morality not exempt from blemishes; "for there is no man that sinneth not." But it is a morality which extends

with equal and uniform care to all the precepts of the divine law, which admits not of the deliberate continued indulgence of any sin, and which follows after perfection. Every failure administers a lesson of future circumspection: compunction for the sins that are daily repented of, and thankfulness for the grace by which they are forgiven, bind the soul more closely to the service of God; the affections are gradually purified; virtuous exertion becomes more vigorous and successful; there is a sensible approach, in passing through the state of trial, to the unsullied holiness which belongs to the state of recompense. The soul, established by a consciousness of this progress in the joy and peace of believing, cherishes the desire and the hope of being made like to God; and the whole life of a Christian upon earth corresponds to the words in which the apostle Paul has described his opinion of himself, his conduct, and his expectations. "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us, therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded."*

* Philippians iii. 12—15.

CHAP. V.

COVENANT OF GRACE.

MANY of the terms, which were introduced in the discussion of particular theological questions, have now become part of the technical language of theology; such as reconciliation, satisfaction, atonement, redemption, and others which belong to the nature of the remedy: predestination, election, reprobation, grace, and others which belong to the extent and the application of the remedy. There are other terms including a complex view of the whole subject, which could not properly be explained till we had finished the three great divisions of it. I am now to speak of several terms which are in common use amongst all Christians, although not understood by all in the same sense, because more or less meaning is annexed to them, according to the opinions entertained upon the different parts of the whole subject.

1. The dispensation of the Gospel is often represented in Scripture under the notion of a kingdom; the kingdom of Christ; a kingdom given to him by the Father, in which all power is committed to him, and all nations are appointed to do him homage. Those who refuse to submit to him are his enemies, who shall illustrate his glory by the punishment which he will inflict. Those who believe in him, being relieved by his interposition from misery, are his subjects, his people, attached to their deliverer by gratitude, admiration, and a sense of duty; showing forth his praise now by their obedience to those laws which he has enacted, and by the peace and joy which, through that obedience, they attain; and destined to exhibit through all ages the triumphs of the Captain of Salvation, by the supreme felicity which they shall receive

hereafter as his gift. His power is exerted in applying the remedy to this peculiar people, or in disposing their minds to embrace it, and in forming and preserving that character by which they are prepared for entering into the joy of their Lord. For this purpose he imparts to them those gifts which "he received for men when he ascended on high;" he sends his Spirit into their hearts; he enables them to overcome those spiritual enemies which are often mentioned in Scripture; he makes the angels, who are also subject to him, ministering spirits to these heirs of salvation; and he renders the whole course of his providence subservient to their improvement. By all these means he keeps their souls from evil while they live upon earth; and having "destroyed him that had the power of death," he will raise their bodies from the grave, and give them a crown of life.

This is a picture which is presented not only in the bold figures of the ancient prophets, but also in the more temperate language of the writers of the New Testament. Many of the parts are very pleasing; and all unite, with perfect consistency, in forming a splendid interesting object, possessing that entire unity which arises from a continued reference to one illustrious person. Those who differ very widely in opinion as to the dignity of the person, or the purpose and the execution of his undertaking, cannot agree as to the method of filling up and colouring the several parts of this picture. But they all profess to use the same phrases, as being clearly founded in the language of Scripture; and the interpretation, by which they accommodate these phrases to their own particular systems, is easily deduced from the general principles of those systems. Hence it is sufficient for me thus briefly to notice this very extensive subject of popular and practical preaching.

2. There is a second kind of phraseology founded upon the connexion between Jesus Christ and his subjects, by which they are represented sometimes as parts of a building, of which he is the corner-stone; sometimes as his branches, he being the true vine; and more commonly as the members of a body, of which he is the head, deriving from him strength for the discharge of every duty, and the principles of that life which shall never end. This last

figure expresses, in the most significant manner, what is called, in theological language, the union of believers with Christ. The bond of union is their faith in him; the effects of the union are a communication of all the fruits of his sufferings; a sense of his love; a continued influence of his Spirit; and a security derived from his resurrection and exaltation, that they shall be raised and glorified with him. And thus, while this figure serves, in a very high degree, to magnify the completeness of the provision made by Christ for the salvation of his people, it inculcates, at the same time, with striking force, a lesson of dependence upon him, and a lesson of mutual love. But as all figures are apt to be abused by the extravagance of human fancy, there are none, the abuse of which is more frequent or more dangerous, than those in which the sublimity of the image serves to nourish presumption, or to encourage indolence. Accordingly, the expressions in which Scripture has conveyed this figure, are the passages most commonly quoted by all fanatical sects, as giving countenance to their bold imagination of an immediate intercourse with heaven. They have sometimes also been alleged in vindication of Antinomian tenets. Much caution, therefore, is necessary when this figure is used in discourses addressed to the people, that they may never lose sight of that substantial connexion which it is meant to exhibit, and that the impression of their being distinct and accountable agents, may never be swallowed up in the confused apprehension of a mystical union.

3. A third kind of phraseology, not uncommon in Scripture, and from thence transferred into theological systems, is that according to which adoption, a word of the Roman law, which expressed a practice recognised in former times as legal, is applied to the superlative goodness manifested in the Gospel. Some Christians consider this phrase as marking nothing more than that those religious privileges, upon account of which Israel is called, in the Old Testament, the son, the first-born of God, are now extended to the nations or large societies of men descended from heathen ancestors, to whom the gospel is published. Others consider it as marking that imitation of the Supreme Being, of which faith in the revelation of the Gospel is the principle, and by which, becoming "followers of God as

dear children," we attain that moral excellence to which the Gospel was designed to exalt human nature. But the greater part of Christians consider the adoption spoken of in the New Testament, as including, besides both these meanings, a particular view of the change made upon the condition of all that are justified; who, although they "were enemies by wicked works," become, through faith in Jesus, the children of God, are received into his family, are placed under his immediate protection, are led by his counsel and his Spirit, have access to him at all times, and possess that security of obtaining eternal life, which arises from its being their inheritance as the sons of God. It is obvious, that while this phrase, thus understood, presents a comprehensive and delightful view of the blessings which belong to true Christians, it may also be improved to the purpose of enforcing the discharge of their duty by the most animating and endearing considerations; and when these two uses of the phrase are properly conjoined, there is none to be found in Scripture that is more significant.

4. There is a fourth kind of phraseology, which will require a fuller illustration than I have thought it necessary to bestow upon the others. It extends through a great part of what we are accustomed to call the system; many doctrines of which, although they appear, at first sight, far removed from it, are found, upon examination, to derive their peculiar complexion from the ideas upon which this phraseology proceeds. It is that, according to which the terms, the new covenant, and the covenant of grace, are applied as a name for the dispensation of the Gospel.

SECTION I.

THE Greek word διαθηκη occurs often in the Septuagint, as the translation of a Hebrew word, which signifies covenant; it occurs also in the Gospels and the Epistles; and it is rendered in our English Bible, sometimes covenant, sometimes testament. The Greek word, according to its etymology, and according to classical use, may denote a testament, a disposition, as well as a covenant; and the

Gospel may be called a testament, because it is a signification of the will of our Saviour, ratified by his death, and because it conveys blessings to be enjoyed after his death. These reasons for giving the dispensation of the Gospel the name of a testament appeared to our translators so striking, that they have rendered διαθηκη more frequently by the word testament than by the word covenant. Yet the train of argument, where διαθηκη occurs, generally appears to proceed upon its meaning a covenant; and therefore, although, when we delineate the nature of the Gospel, the beautiful idea of its being a testament is not to be lost sight of, yet we are to remember that the word testament, which we read in the Gospels and Epistles, is the translation of a word which the sense requires to be rendered covenant. When Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, he said, "This cup is ἡ καινη διαθηκη εν τῳ αἱματι μου, or το αἱμα της καινης διαθηκης. As these words are applied to that which he intended to be a memorial of his death, there may seem to be a peculiar propriety in rendering διαθηκη, as our translators have there done, by the word testament. But it is to be observed, that καινη διαθηκη implies a reference to a former, which is often called in the Epistles παλαια or πρωτη διαθηκη. Now there was nothing in the παλαια διαθηκη analogous to the notion of a testament. And, therefore, although to the καινη διαθηκη there did supervene this peculiar and interesting circumstance, that the blessings therein promised are conveyed by the death of a testator, yet the contrast between the παλαια and καινη διαθηκη would be better marked, if the substantive were rendered by a word, which is equally proper when applied to both adjectives, rather than by a word, which, however fitly it corresponds to one of them, cannot without a considerable stretch of meaning be joined to the other. In the passage, Heb. ix. 15, 16, 17, the apostle appears, by our translation, to found an argument upon an allusion to the classical meaning of διαθηκη, as signifying a testament. But so far is there from being any necessity for translating it testament in this place, that the reasoning of the apostle is more pertinent and forcible, when covenant, the common rendering of the word, is retained. The following is Dr. Macknight's translation of these three verses: "And for this reason, of the new covenant he is

the mediator, that his death being accomplished for the redemption of the transgressions of the first covenant, the called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. For where a covenant (is made by sacrifice,) there is a necessity that the death of the appointed sacrifice be brought in. For a covenant is firm over dead sacrifices, seeing it never hath force whilst the appointed sacrifice liveth."

A covenant implies two parties, and mutual stipulations. The new covenant must derive its name from something in the nature of the stipulations between the parties different from that which existed before; so that we cannot understand the propriety of the name καινη, without looking back to what is called the παλαια, or πρωτη. On examining the passages in Gal. iii. in 2 Cor. iii. and in Heb. viii. ix. x., where παλαια and καινη διαθηκη are contrasted, it will be found that παλαια διαθηκη means the dispensation given by Moses to the children of Israel; and καινη διαθηκη, the dispensation of the Gospel published by Jesus Christ; and that the object of the apostle is to illustrate the superior excellence of the latter dispensation. But in order to preserve the consistency of the apostle's writings, it is necessary to remember that there are two different lights in which the former dispensation may be viewed. Christians appear to draw the line between παλαια and καινη διαθηκη, according to the light in which they view that dispensation. It may be considered merely as a method of publishing the moral law to a particular nation; and then with whatever solemnity it was delivered, and with whatever cordiality it was accepted, it is not a covenant that could give life. For being nothing more than what divines call a covenant of works, a directory of conduct requiring by its nature entire personal obedience, promising life to those who yielded that obedience, but making no provision for transgressors, it left under a curse "every one that continued not in all things that were written in the book of the law to do them." This is the essential imperfection of what is called the covenant of works, the name given in theology to that transaction, in which it is conceived that the Supreme Lord of the universe promised to his creature man, that he would reward that obedience to his law, which, without any such promise, was due to him as the Creator.

It is understood in the Calvinistic system, that this covenant was entered into with Adam, as the representative of the human race. It is allowed by those who deny this representation, that a covenant of works is entered into with every one of the children of Adam by the condition of his being; for "the Gentiles show the work of the law written in their hearts." And they who regard the covenant made with Israel at Mount Sinai, which has been called the Sinaitic covenant, as nothing more than a manner of giving the moral law with peculiar circumstances of splendour and majesty, consider the following epithets which occur in the writings of Paul, as applicable in their full meaning to the whole of the Mosaic dispensation; "weak through the flesh,"* *i. e.* not containing a provision for the salvation of men suitable to the necessity of their nature; "unprofitable, making nothing perfect;"† "the ministration of death."‡

But although some sects of Christians have chosen to rest in this view of the Mosaic dispensation, there is another view of it opened to us in Scripture. No sooner had Adam broken the covenant of works, than a promise of a final deliverance from the evils incurred by the breach of it was given. This promise was the foundation of that transaction which Almighty God, in treating with Abraham, condescends to call "my covenant with thee," and which, upon this authority, has received in theology the name of the Abrahamic covenant. Upon the one part, Abraham, whose faith was counted to him for righteousness, received this charge from God, "walk before me and be thou perfect;" upon the other part the God whom he believed, and whose voice he obeyed, besides promising other blessings to him and his seed, uttered these significant words, "in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

In this transaction, then, there was the essence of a covenant, for there were mutual stipulations between two parties; and there was superadded, as a seal of the covenant, the rite of circumcision, which, being prescribed by God, was a confirmation of his promise to all who com-

* Rom. viii. 3. † Heb. vii. 18, 19. ‡ 2 Cor. iii. 7.

plied with it, and, being submitted to by Abraham, was, on his part, an acceptance of the covenant.

The Abrahamic covenant appears, from the nature of the stipulations, to be more than a covenant of works; and, as it was not confined to Abraham, but extended to his seed, it could not be disannulled by any subsequent transactions, which fell short of a fulfilment of the blessing promised. The law of Moses, which was given to the seed of Abraham four hundred and thirty years after, did not come up to the terms of that covenant even with regard to them, for in its form it was a covenant of works, and to other nations it did not directly convey any blessing. But although the Mosaic dispensation did not fulfil the Abrahamic covenant, it was so far from setting that covenant aside, that it cherished the expectation of its being fulfilled: for it continued the rite of circumcision, which was the seal of the covenant; and in those ceremonies which it enjoined, there was a shadow, a type, an obscure representation of the promised blessing. Accordingly, many who lived under the παλαια διαθηκη were justified by faith in a Saviour who was to come. The nation of Israel considered themselves as the children of the covenant made with Abraham; and when the Messiah was born, his birth was regarded by devout Jews as a performance of the mercy promised to their fathers in remembrance of the holy covenant made with Abraham.*

Here, then, is another view of the Mosaic dispensation. "It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made."† By delivering a moral law which men felt themselves unable to obey, by denouncing judgments which it did not of itself provide any effectual method of escaping, and by holding forth in various oblations the promised and expected Saviour, "it was a schoolmaster to bring men unto Christ." The covenant made with Abraham retained its force during the dispensation of the law, and was the end of that dispensation. And the particular manner of administering this covenant, which the wisdom of God chose to continue for a long course of ages, is called παλαια διαθηκη,

* Luke i. 72, 78. † Gal. iii. 19.

When the purposes for which this manner was chosen were accomplished, παλαια διαθηκη, "waxing old, vanished away:" and there succeeded that other method of administering the covenant, which, in respect of the facility of all the observances, the simplicity and clearness with which the blessings are exhibited, and the extent to which they are promulgated, is called καινη διαθηκη; but which is so far from being opposite to παλαια διαθηκη, or essentially different from it, that it is in substance the very Gospel which was "preached before unto Abraham," and was embraced by all those who "walked in the steps of his faith."

Writers upon theology, sometimes from a difference in general principles, and sometimes from a desire to elucidate the subject by introducing a new language, have differed in the application of the terms now mentioned. But the views which have been given furnish the grounds upon which we defend that established language, which is familiar to our ears, that there are only two covenants essentially different, and opposite to one another, the covenant of works, made with the first man, intimated by the constitution of human nature to every one of his posterity, and having for its terms, "Do this and live;"—and the covenant of grace, which was the substance of the Abrahamic covenant, and which entered into the constitution of the Sinaitic covenant, but which is more clearly revealed and more extensively published in the Gospel.

This last covenant, which the Scriptures call new in respect of the mode of its dispensation under the Gospel, although it is not new in respect of its essence, has received, in the language of theology, the name of the covenant of grace, for the two following obvious reasons; because, after man had broken the covenant of works, it was pure grace or favour in the Almighty to enter into a new covenant with him; and because by the covenant there is conveyed that grace, which enables man to comply with the terms of it. It could not be a covenant unless there were terms—something required, as well as something promised or given,—duties to be performed, as well as blessings to be received. Accordingly, the tenor of the new covenant, founded upon the promise originally made to Abraham, is expressed by Jeremiah in words which the apostle to the Hebrews has quot-

ed as a description of it; "I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people;"*—words, which intimate, on one part, not only entire reconciliation with God, but the continued exercise of all the perfections of the Godhead in promoting the happiness of his people, and the full communication of all the blessings which flow from his unchangeable love; on the other part, the surrender of the heart and affections of his people, the dedication of all the powers of their nature to his service, and the willing, uniform obedience of their lives. But, although there are mutual stipulations, the covenant retains its character of a covenant of grace, and must be regarded as having its source purely in the grace of God. For the very circumstances which rendered the new covenant necessary take away the possibility of there being any merit upon our part: the faith by which the covenant is accepted is the gift of God; and all the good works by which Christians continue to keep the covenant, originate in that change of character which is the fruit of the operation of his Spirit. By the conditions of the covenant of grace, therefore, are meant, not any circumstances in our character and conduct which may be regarded as inducements moving God to enter into a new covenant with us, but purely those expressions of thankfulness which naturally proceed from the persons with whom God has made this covenant, which are the effects and evidences of the grace conveyed to their souls, and the indispensable qualifications for the complete and final participation of the blessings of the covenant. With this caution, we scruple not to say that there are conditions in the covenant of grace, and we press upon Christians the fulfilment of the conditions on their part: although this is a language which some of the first reformers, in their zeal against popery, and their solicitude to avoid its errors, thought it dangerous to hold, and which, unless it be properly explained, still sounds offensive in the ears of particular descriptions of men.

The question concerning the extent of the covenant of grace turns upon points that have been already explained.† The difference of opinion between the advocates for universal and particular redemption does not respect the number who shall be saved. For whether God intended to

* Heb. viii. 10. † Book iv. ch. 6.

make the covenant of grace with all men, or whether he intended to make it only with those, whom from the beginning he elected, it is allowed, on both sides, that they only are saved who accept of the covenant.

SECTION II.

It is one most important circumstance in the constitution of the covenant of grace, that it was made through the sufferings of Jesus Christ. Thence arises the term Mediator, in the use of which all Christians agree, because it is frequently applied to him in the New Testament; but concerning the meaning and import of which they differ widely.

Jesus is called in Scripture μεσιτης, μεσιτης θεου και ανθρωπων, διαθηκης κρειττονος, καινης, νεας, μεσιτης.* The word μεσιτης literally means a person in the middle, between two parties; and the fitness of there being a mediator of the covenant of grace arises from this, that the nature of the covenant implies that the two parties were at variance. Those, who hold the Socinian principles with regard to the nature of the remedy, understand mediator to mean nothing more than a messenger sent from God to give assurance of forgiveness to his offending creatures. Those, who hold the doctrine of the atonement, understand that Jesus is called the mediator of the new covenant, because he reconciles the two parties, by having appeased the wrath of God which man had deserved; and by subduing that enmity to God by which their hearts were alienated from him. It is plain that this is being a mediator in the strict and proper sense of the word; and there seems to be no reason for resting in a meaning less proper and emphatical. This sense of the term mediator coincides with the meaning of another phrase applied to him, Heb. vii. 22, where he is called κρειττονος διαθηκης εγγυος. If he is a mediator in the last sense, then he is also εγγυος, the sponsor, the surety of the covenant. He undertook

* 1 Tim. ii. 5. Heb. viii. 6; ix. 15; xii. 24.

on the part of the Supreme Lawgiver, that the sins of those who repent shall be forgiven; and he fulfilled this undertaking, by offering in their stead a satisfaction to divine justice. He undertook on their part that they should keep the terms of the covenant; and he fulfils this undertaking by the influence of his Spirit upon their hearts.

From this high sense of the term mediator, in which the general strain of the New Testament seems to warrant us to understand that word, there arise what are commonly called the three offices, upon account of his holding which, by the designation of God, Jesus is emphatically styled the Christ, or the anointed. The three offices of Christ are familiar to the hearers of the Gospel from the instruction of our Catechism: they are generally acceptable as subjects of preaching; and they may be improved so as to furnish matter for useful and excellent discourses. The meaning which we affix to the word mediator suggests the following, as the most natural order of stating the three offices. The Christ is a priest, who offered on the cross a true and perfect sacrifice, by which he has purchased forgiveness for all that repent: he is a prophet, who publishes what the apostle calls "the word of reconciliation," or the terms of the new covenant; and he is a king, who establishes his throne in the hearts of his people, inclines them to accept of the covenant, enables them to fulfil its terms, and has power to confer upon them all its blessings.

If a mediator be essential to the covenant of grace, and if all who have been saved from the time of the first transgression were saved by that covenant, it follows that the mediator of the new covenant acted in that character before he was manifested in the flesh. Hence the importance of that doctrine respecting the person of Christ; that all the communications which the Almighty condescended to hold with the human race were carried on from the beginning by this person, that it is he who spake to the patriarchs, who gave the law by Moses, and who is called in the Old Testament the Angel of the Covenant.* The views which we have now attained of the remedy provided for the moral condition of the human race, open to us the

* Book iii. chap. 5.

full importance of a doctrine, which manifestly unites in one faith all who obtain deliverance from that condition. For according to this doctrine, not only did the virtue of the blood which he shed as a priest extend to the ages past before his manifestation, but all the intimations of the new covenant established in his blood were given by him as the great prophet, and the blessings of the covenant were applied in every age by the Spirit, which he as the king of his people sends forth.

The Socinians, who consider Jesus as a mere man, having no existence till he was born of Mary, necessarily reject the doctrine now stated. And the church of Rome, although they admit the divinity of our Saviour, yet by the system which they hold with regard to the mediation of Christ, agree with the Socinians in throwing out of the dispensations of the grace of God, that beautiful and complete unity which arises from their having been conducted by one person. The church of Rome considers Christ as mediator, only in respect of his human nature. As that nature did not exist till he was born of Mary, they do not think it possible that he could exercise the office of mediator under the Old Testament; and as they admit that a mediator is essential to the covenant of grace, they believe that those who lived under the Old Testament, not enjoying the benefit of his mediation, did not obtain complete remission of sins. They suppose, therefore, that persons in former times who believed in a Saviour that was to come, and who obtained justification with God by this faith, were detained after death in a place of the infernal regions, which received the name of *Limbus Patrum;* a kind of prison where they did not endure punishment, but remained without partaking of the joys of heaven, in earnest expectation of the coming of Christ, who, after suffering on the cross, descended to hell that he might set them free. This fanciful system has no other foundation than the slender support, which it appears to receive from some obscure passages of Scripture that admit of another interpretation. But if Christ acted as the mediator of the covenant of grace from the time of the first transgression, this system becomes wholly unnecessary; and we may believe, according to the general strain of Scripture, and what we account the analogy of faith, that all who

"died in faith," since the world began, entered immediately after death into that heavenly country which they desired.

Although the members of the church of Rome adopt the language of Scripture, in which Jesus is styled the mediator of the new covenant, they differ from all Protestants in acknowledging other mediators; and the use, which they make of the doctrine that Christ is mediator only in his human nature, is to justify their admitting those who had no other nature to share that office with him. Saints, martyrs, and especially the Virgin Mary, are called *mediatores secundarii*, because it is conceived that they hold this character under Christ, and that, by virtue of his mediation, the superfluity of their merits may be applied to procure acceptance with God for our imperfect services. Under this character supplications and solemn addresses are presented to them; and the *mediatores secundarii* receive, in the church of Rome, not only the honour due to eminent virtue, but a worship and homage which that church wishes to vindicate from the charge of idolatry, by calling it the same kind of inferior and secondary worship which is offered to the man Christ Jesus, who in his human nature acted as a mediator.

In opposition to all this, we hold that Jesus Christ was qualified to act as mediator by the union between his divine and his human nature; that his divine nature gave an infinite value to all that he did, rendering it effectual for the purpose of reconciling us to God, while the condescension by which he approached to man, in taking part of flesh and blood, fulfilled the gracious intention for which a mediator was appointed; that the introducing any other mediator is unnecessary, derives no warrant from Scripture, and is derogatory to the honour of him who is there called the "one mediator between God and men;" and that as the union of the divine to the human nature is the foundation of that worship, which in Scripture is often paid to the mediator of the new covenant, this worship does not afford the smallest countenance to the idolatry and will-worship of those, who ascribe divine honours to any mortal.

373

SECTION III.

PRAYER is the natural expression of the sentiments of a dependent creature. But the dispensation of the Gospel, as a covenant of grace, furnishes a striking illustration of the obligation to prayer in general, the propriety of the several parts of it, and the encouragements to the regular performance of this duty. The inestimable value of the blessings conveyed by this covenant, the unmerited love from which they proceed, and the bright display of the divine perfections in the method of conferring them, quicken all those feelings of piety and gratitude to God, with which it is the privilege of the human heart to glow, and call for the most devout adoration, and the warmest thanksgiving. The intimate relations by which the covenant of grace connects Christians with one another, as well as with their common Father, produce intercessions, those expressions of benevolence in which they commend one another to his care. The consciousness of that imperfection which is inseparable from human nature, and of those sins which we daily commit, draws forth humble confessions, and supplications in the presence of Him, who "is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." The sense of our own inability to discharge our duty, and the desire of obtaining that heavenly aid which is promised to them that ask it, give the form of petition to all our purposes of obedience; and the hope of those future blessings of the covenant, to which we are conducted by that obedience, imparts to the thoughts and affections that degree of elevation, which seeks for intercourse with heaven.

There is a vulgar notion concerning prayer, which is derogatory to the character of the Almighty, that our importunity can extort blessings from him, and produce a change in his counsels. The notion is unreasonable, and directly opposite to the principles upon which the Calvinistic doctrine of the covenant of grace proceeds. Yet every consideration suggested by the light of nature, which shows prayer to be a duty, is very much enforced by the Calvinistic doctrine; and all the fervour which the

Scripture recommends in performing the duty appears upon the principles of that doctrine, to be highly reasonable, as proceeding from that state of mind, which enters into the character of those with whom God has made the covenant of grace, as cherishing and improving that character, as being the preparation for their receiving his blessings, and as an indispensable condition, which for their sakes he has required. Accordingly our Lord, while he corrects different errors concerning prayer, which proceed from unworthy conceptions of the Deity, delivers a form of prayer, so conceived as to imply that we are to pray to God daily, and full of instruction as to the manner of discharging that duty. This instruction, the exposition of which occupies a considerable part of the catechism of our church, is unfolded in every system of theology.

The humility and self-abasement, formed by all the discoveries of the Gospel, might either restrain the mind from approaching the Almighty, or tincture all its devotions with a spirit of dejection and melancholy, were not this tendency counterbalanced by the character under which the Mediator of the covenant of grace is revealed. It is said that "he maketh intercession for us;"* he is called "our Advocate with the Father;"† and we are commanded to pray in his name.‡

We must be careful to separate from our notions of the intercession of Christ all those circumstances of tears, of earnest crying, and of prostration before his Father, which would degrade him to the condition of a suppliant, and also every idea of his being uncertain with regard to the issue of the applications which he makes. The intercession of Christ proceeds upon the inexhaustible merit of his sacrifice; it is accomplished by his appearing in the presence of God for us, and offering our prayers and services to the Father; and, being the intercession of him who has power to give eternal life to as many as he will, it cannot fail of being effectual to the purpose, of procuring for his people all those blessings which he chooses to bestow. The intercession of Christ, understood with these qualifications, is agreeable to the analogy of the

* Rom. viii. 34. † 1 John ii. 1. ‡ John xvi. 23.

whole scheme of salvation, which is uniformly represented as originating in the love of the Father, but as reaching us only through the mediation of the Son; and it is obvious to observe that a doctrine, which teaches that our prayers are heard, and our services accepted, not upon account of any thing in us, but purely upon account of the righteousness of him, "in whom the Father is well pleased," while it illustrates the majesty and holiness of the Supreme Ruler, affords an encouragement most graciously accommodated to the infirmities and sentiments of those, for whom Christ "maketh intercession."

The nature and grounds of that entire dependence upon the Lord Jesus, which Christians are everywhere taught to maintain, expose the grossness and the folly of those errors which lead the church of Rome to address the Virgin Mary, departed saints, and angels, as intercessors with God. It is said, in extenuation of these errors, that the unrivalled dignity of the Lord Jesus is preserved by calling him *mediator primarius, mediator redemptionis*, while others are only *mediatores secundarii, mediatores intercessionis;* and it is alleged by those who address to the *mediatores intercessionis* such words as *ora pro nobis*, that the prayers which they solicit are only a continuation in heaven of the intercessions which good men offer for one another upon earth. But the answer to all these pleas is obvious. The Scriptures give no warrant for the distinction between *mediator primarius* and *mediatores secundarii*. Christ is *mediator intercessionis* because he is *mediator redemptionis;* and, upon this account, his intercession is effectual. The intercessions of Christians upon earth are an expression of benevolence—of an earnest desire of the happiness of others, called forth by scenes which they behold, but not implying any presumption, that what others are unworthy to receive will be given because it is asked by us; whereas to solicit the intercession of the inhabitants of heaven is unmeaning, unless we suppose that they have a knowledge of our condition, and that they have power with God,—that kind of merit which can insure their application for us being heard. Both parts of this supposition being gratuitously assumed, the addresses offered in the church of Rome to the *mediatores secundarii* only weaken the sense of dependence upon the

mediator of the new covenant, the "King of Saints" and the head of the "innumerable company of angels," the Son of God, through whom Christians "have access to the Father;" and such addresses, after the example of the heathen mythology, divide the attention and the worship of Christians amidst a multitude of inferior beings, to whom, without any warrant, they may choose to ascribe certain degrees of power and influence, and thus introduce what the apostle calls "will-worship."*

SECTION IV.

It is usual for covenants amongst men to be confirmed by certain solemnities. In the simplicity of ancient times, the solemnities were monuments or large stones erected as a witness of the transaction, and meetings at stated times between the parties or their descendants, in commemoration of it.† In more advanced periods of society, the solemnities have become deeds written in a formal style, sealed, delivered, and exchanged between the parties at the time of the contract, and remaining, till they are cancelled, as vouchers of the original transaction. As circumcision was ordained as the token and seal of the covenant with Abraham, we are led to expect that, when the Almighty published the covenant of grace by his Son, and invited all nations to enter into it, he would, with the same condescension to human weakness, grant some confirmation of the grace therein manifested, some sensible sign which might establish a reliance upon his promise, and constitute the ground of a federal act between him and his creatures. A great part of the Christian world consider this as the intention of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, the two solemn rites of our religion, which are commonly known by the name of Sacraments.

* Col. ii. 23. † Genesis and Joshua, passim.

This name is nowhere applied to these rites in Scripture. *Sacramentum*, being a word of Latin extraction, could not be introduced into theology by the original language, in which the books of the New Testament were written; and in all the places of the Vulgate, or old Latin translation of the Bible, it is put for the Greek word μυστηριον. Dr. Campbell, in his Preliminary Dissertations to a New Translation of the Gospels, has discussed the different applications of the words μυστηριον and *sacramentum*; and he has clearly shown that μυστηριον always means either a secret, something unknown till it was revealed; or the latent spiritual meaning of some fable, emblem, or type. Now, in both these senses μυστηριον is rendered in the Vulgate *sacramentum*, although when we attend to the etymology of the two words, they do not appear to correspond. Μεγα εστι μυστηριον ευσεβειας: *magnum est sacramentum pietatis*: το μυστηριον των επτα αστερων, *sacramentum septem stellarum*; the hidden meaning of the seven stars. But although Scripture does not warrant the application now made of the word sacrament, it has the sanction of very ancient practice. As some of the most sacred and retired parts of the ancient heathen worship were called mysteries, there is reason to think that the word μυστηρια was early applied to the Lord's Supper, which, from the beginning, Christians regarded with much reverence, which, in times of persecution, they were obliged to celebrate in private, and from which they were accustomed to exclude both those who had been guilty of notorious sins, and those who had not attained sufficient knowledge. The Latin word *sacramentum* followed this application of the Greek word; and if Pliny is correct in the information he conveys in his letter to Trajan, concerning the Christians in the end of the first century, his expression may suggest that there was conceived to be a peculiar propriety in giving this name to the Lord's Supper, from the analogy between the engagement to abstain from sin, which those who partook of that rite contracted, and the military oath of fidelity, which was known in classical writers by the name *sacramentum*.

It appears, then, that the word, in the sense in which it is now used, is an ecclesiastical, not a scriptural word, and that the amount of that sense is to be gathered, not

from the original meaning of the word, but from the practice of those with whom it occurs. For from the etymology nothing more can be deduced, than that a sacrament is something, either a word or an action, connected with what is sacred; and this is equally true, whether we annex to it the Popish sense, the Socinian sense, or the sense in which it is understood by the greater part of the reformed churches.

Sacraments are conceived in the church of Rome to consist of matter, deriving, from the action of the priest in pronouncing certain words, a divine virtue, by which grace is conveyed to the soul of every person who receives them. It is supposed to be necessary that the priest, in pronouncing the words, has the intention of giving to the matter that divine virtue, otherwise it remains in its original state. On the part of those who receive the sacrament, it is required that they be free from any of those sins called in the church of Rome mortal; but it is not required of them to exercise any good disposition, to possess faith, or to resolve that they shall amend their lives. For such is conceived to be the physical virtue of a sacrament, administered by a priest with a good intention, that, unless when it is opposed by the obstacle of a mortal sin, the very act of receiving it is sufficient. This act was called, in the language of the schools, *opus operatum*, the work done, independently of any disposition of mind attending the deed; and the superiority of the sacraments of the New Testament, over the sacraments of the Old, was thus expressed, that the sacraments of the Old Testament were effectual *ex opere operantis*, from the piety and faith of the persons to whom they were administered; while the sacraments of the New Testament convey grace, *ex opere operato*, from their own intrinsic virtue, and an immediate physical influence upon the mind of him who receives them.

The arguments opposed to this doctrine by the first reformers will readily occur to your minds, from the simple exposition of it which I have given. It represents the sacraments as a mere charm, the use of which, being totally disjoined from every mental exercise, cannot be regarded as a reasonable service. It gives men the hope of receiving, by the use of a charm, the full participation of the

grace of God, although they continue to indulge that very large class of sins, to which the accommodating morality of the church of Rome extends the name of venial; and yet it makes this high privilege entirely dependent upon the intention of another, who, although he performs all the outward acts which belong to the sacrament, may, if he chooses, withhold the communication of that physical virtue, without which the sacrament is of none avail.

The Socinian doctrine concerning the nature of the sacraments is founded upon a sense of the absurdity and danger of the popish doctrine, and a solicitude to avoid any approach to it, and runs into the opposite extreme. It is conceived that the sacraments are not essentially distinct from any other rites or ceremonies; that as they consist of a symbolical action, in which something external and material is employed to represent what is spiritual and invisible, they may by this address to the senses be of use in reviving the remembrance of past events, and in cherishing pious sentiments: but that their effect is purely moral, and that they contribute by that moral effect to the improvement of the individual in the same manner with reading the Scriptures, and many other exercises of religion. It is admitted, indeed, by the Socinians, that the sacraments are of further advantage to the whole society of Christians, as being the solemn badges by which the disciples of Jesus are discriminated from other men, and the appointed method of declaring that faith in Christ, by the public profession of which Christians minister to the improvement of one another. But in these two points, the moral effect upon the individual, and the advantage to society, is contained all that a Socinian holds concerning the general nature of the sacraments.

This doctrine is infinitely more rational than the Popish, more friendly to the interest of morality, and consequently more honourable to the religion of Christ. But, like all the other parts of the Socinian system, it represents that religion in the simple view of being a lesson of righteousness, and loses sight of that character of the Gospel, which is meant to be implied in calling it a covenant of grace. The greater part of Protestants, therefore, following an expression of the apostle, Rom. iv. 11, when he is speak-

ing of circumcision, consider the sacraments as not only signs, but also seals of the covenant of grace.

Those who apply this phrase to the sacraments of the New Testament admit every part of the Socinian doctrine concerning the nature of sacraments, and are accustomed to employ that doctrine to correct those popish errors upon this subject, which are not yet eradicated from the minds of many of the people. But although they admit that the Socinian doctrine is true as far as it goes, they consider it as incomplete. For while they hold that the sacraments yield no benefit to those, upon whom the signs employed in them do not produce the proper moral effect, they regard these signs as intended to represent an inward invisible grace, which proceeds from him by whom they are appointed, and as pledges that this grace will be conveyed to all in whom the moral effect is produced. The sacraments, therefore, in their opinion, constitute federal acts, in which the persons who receive them with proper dispositions, solemnly engage to fulfil their part of the covenant, and God confirms his promise to them in a sensible manner; not as if the promise of God were of itself insufficient to render any event certain, but because this manner of exhibiting the blessings promised gives a stronger impression of the truth of the promise, and conveys to the mind an assurance that it will be fulfilled.

According to this account of the sacraments, the express institution of God is essentially requisite to constitute their nature; and in this respect sacraments are distinguished from what may be called the ceremonies of religion. Ceremonies are in their nature arbitrary; and different means may be employed by different persons with success, according to their constitution, their education, and their circumstances, to cherish the sentiments of devotion, and to confirm good purposes. But no rite which is not ordained by God can be conceived to be a seal of his promise, or the pledge of any event that depends upon his good pleasure. Hence that any rite may come up to our idea of a sacrament, we require in it, not merely a vague and general resemblance between the external matter which is the visible substance of the rite, and the thing thereby signified, but also words of institution, and a promise by which the two are connected together; and hence

we reject five of the seven sacraments that are numbered in the church of Rome, because in some of the five we do not find any matter, without which there is not that sign which enters into our definition of a sacrament; and in others we do not find any promise connecting the matter used with the grace said to be thereby signified, although upon this connexion the essence of a sacrament depends.

Burnet's exposition of the 25th Article shows upon what grounds, and with what strict propriety, the church of England says, "those five commonly called sacraments, that is to say, confirmation, penance, orders, matrimony, and extreme unction, are not to be counted for sacraments of the Gospel, being such as have grown partly of the corrupt following of the apostles; partly are states of life allowed in the Scriptures, but yet have not like nature of sacraments with Baptism and the Lord's Supper; for that they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained by God." In Baptism and the Lord's Supper, to which the name of sacraments is, according to our definition, limited, we find all which that definition requires. In each there is matter, an external visible substance; and there is also a positive institution, authorizing that substance to be used with certain words in a religious rite. And we think that both from the nature of the institution, and from the manner in which each sacrament is mentioned in other places of the New Testament, the two are not barely signs of invisible grace, or badges of the Christian profession, but were intended by him who appointed them to be pledges of that grace, and seals of the covenant by which it is conveyed.

Erskine's Dissertations.
Macknight's Preliminary Dissertations.
Leechman on Prayer.

CHAP. VI.

QUESTIONS CONCERNING BAPTISM.

SECTION I.

The washings and sprinklings, which formed part of the religious ceremonies of all nations, arose probably from a consciousness of impurity, and an opinion that innocence was acceptable to the gods; and they were originally intended, on the part of the worshippers, as a profession of their purpose to abstain, in future, from the pollutions which they had contracted. Those who were initiated into the mysteries of the heathen religion bathed, before their initiation, in a particular stream, where they were supposed to leave all their previous errors and defilements, and from which they entered pure into the belief of new opinions, and the participation of sacred rites. When any inhabitants of the countries adjoining to Judea turned from the worship of idols, and, professing their faith in the God of Israel, desired to be numbered as his servants among the proselytes to the law of Moses, they were baptized; and those who had formerly been held in abhorrence were, by this ceremony, admitted into a certain degree of communion with the peculiar people of God. When John appeared preaching in the land of Judea, he came baptizing, and his baptism was emphatically called the baptism of repentance, because the substance of his preaching was, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."* The

* Mark i. 4.

people who "went to him and were baptized, confessing their sins," had been accustomed to wash from the errors of idolatry those who became proselytes to their law. But they themselves had need of washing, before they were admitted into the kingdom of the Messiah; and his days were the time of the fulfilment of that word which God spake by the mouth of Ezekiel: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you."*

In accommodation to this general practice, and to these peculiar opinions of the Jews, Jesus, as soon as he assumed the character of "a teacher sent from God," employed his apostles to baptize those who came to him: and having condescended, in this respect, to the usage of the times while he remained upon earth, he introduced baptism into the last commission which he gave his apostles, in a manner which seems to intimate that he intended it to be the initiatory right of his universal religion. Πορευθεντες ουν μαθητευσατε παντα τα εθνη, βαπτιζοντες αυτους. But in order to render it a distinguishing rite, by which his disciples should be separated from the disciples of any other teacher who might choose to baptize, he added these words, εις το ονομα του Πατρος και του Υιου και του αγιου Πνευματος.† Those who were baptized among the heathen were baptized in certain mysteries. The Jews are said by the apostle Paul to have been "baptized unto Moses," at the time when they followed him through the Red Sea, as the servant of God sent to be their leader.‡ Those who went out to John "were baptized unto John's baptism," *i. e.* into the expectation of the person whom John announced, and into repentance of those sins which John condemned.§ Christians are "baptized into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost," because in this expression is implied that whole system of truth which the disciples of Christ believe; into the name of the Father, the one true and living God whom Christians profess to serve; of the Son, that divine person revealed in the New Testament, whom the Father sent to be the Saviour of the

* Ezek. xxxvi. 25.
† Matt. xxviii. 19.
‡ 1 Cor. x. 2.
§ Acts xix. 3.

world; of the Holy Ghost, the divine person also revealed there as the comforter, the sanctifier, and the guide of Christians.

As all who were baptized at the first appearance of Christianity had been educated in idolatry, or had known only that preparatory dispensation which the Jews enjoyed, it was necessary that they should be instructed in the meaning of that solemn expression which accompanied their Christian baptism. Accordingly, the practice of the apostles in administering baptism, judging by the few instances which the book of Acts has recorded, corresponds to the order intimated in the commission of our Lord, where the instruction that makes men disciples is supposed to precede baptism. Thus to the minister of the queen of Ethiopia Philip first "preached Jesus;" he then said, "if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest be baptized;" and when the man answered, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God," Philip baptized him.* The following phrases, which occur in different epistles, "the form of sound words, the principles of the doctrine of Christ, the doctrine of baptism," probably mean some such short summary of Christian doctrine, as we know was used in the age immediately succeeding that of the apostles, for the instruction of persons who came to be baptized. Peter's joining to baptism, 1 Pet. iii. 21. συνειδήσεως αγαθης επερωτημα εις Θεον, seems to imply, that in the apostolic age questions were always proposed to them. And this is confirmed by the expression, Heb. x. 22, "having our bodies washed with pure water, let us hold fast the profession of our faith:" the most natural interpretation of which words is, that persons at their baptism were required to make a declaration of their faith; and we know that, if not from the beginning, yet in very early times, there was joined with this declaration a renunciation of former vices, and a promise to lead a good life.

It appears from this deduction that baptism was, in its original institution, a solemn method of assuming the profession of the Christian religion, a mark of distinction between the disciples of Jesus, and those who held any other system of faith. Socinus and some of his followers, con-

* Acts viii. 35—38

fining themselves to this single view of baptism, consider it as an institution highly proper at the first planting of the Christian church, which was formed out of idolaters and Jews, but as superseded in all Christian countries by the establishment and general profession of Christianity. For it appears to them that what was intended merely for the purpose of being a discriminating rite ceases of course, in circumstances where there is no need for a discrimination; and that the observance of it is of real importance only in those cases, which we very rarely behold, when persons who had been educated in another religion are converted to Christianity. Although the modern Socinians have not paid so much respect to the opinion of Socinus as to lay aside the use of baptism, yet their sentiments upon this point are much the same with his. "They would make no great difficulty," to use the words of Dr. Priestley, "of omitting it entirely in Christian families; but they do not think it of importance enough to act otherwise than their ancestors have done before them, in a matter of so great indifference."

The Quakers are the only sect of Christians who make no use of baptism; and their practice in this matter is only a particular application of their leading principles. It appears to them that, as it is the distinguishing character of the Gospel to be the dispensation of the Spirit, and as every Christian is under the immediate guidance of an inward light, all the ordinances of former times only presignified that effusion of the Holy Ghost, which, in the age of the Gospel, was to render the further use of them unnecessary. When John the Baptist says, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but he that cometh after me shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire," it appears to the Quakers, that John, by this contrast, means to represent his own baptism as emblematical of the baptism of Jesus, and to give notice that the baptism by water, which was the emblem, should cease as soon as the baptism with the Holy Ghost, which was the thing signified, should commence. The baptism with water, practised by the apostles of Jesus, they regard as merely an accommodation to the prejudices of the times, till the spiritual nature of the Gospel was understood; and they consider the miraculous effusion of the gifts of the Spirit upon the apostles

at the day of Pentecost, which our Lord himself calls their being baptized with the Holy Ghost, and the visible descent of the Holy Ghost upon some of those who were baptized by the apostles, as affording the true interpretation of the word baptism, as it occurs in the discourses of our Lord. Hence they conclude that when he says in the commission given to his apostles, "Go, make disciples of all nations, baptizing them," he does not mean literally to command his apostles to plunge in water the bodies of all who should become his disciples, but he only uses a figurative expression, borrowed from the ancient emblematical practice, for that communication of the Spirit, which in all ages was to form the characteristical distinction of his disciples.

Other Christians do not find this reasoning sufficient to warrant the conclusion which the Quakers draw from it: that the use of baptism is now to be laid aside. They do not admit the general principle that all emblems and symbols are unnecessary, as soon as the thing signified is come; for this principle, if followed out to its full extent, would annihilate all religious ceremonies. With regard to the particular case of baptism, they consider the expression used in the commission given by our Lord, as interpreted to all Christians by the practice of baptizing with water, which the Apostles had used before they received the commission; which they continued to use after it; and which, upon their authority, and after their example, was invariably followed in the primitive church. In the commission there do not appear to be any circumstances suggesting that the command was not to be universally obeyed, according to that literal meaning which the Apostles seem to have given it; or that there is any limitation of time, after which what was at first understood literally was to receive a figurative interpretation; and accordingly, all other Christians, besides the Quakers, observe what they consider the explicit direction of our Lord, by employing baptism in all situations of the church, as the initiatory rite of his religion.

In one circumstance, respecting the mode of administering baptism, the greater part of Christians have departed from the primitive practice. Both sprinkling and immersion are implied in the word *βαπτιζω*; both were used in

the religious ceremonies of the Jews, and both may be considered as significant of the purpose of baptism, and as corresponding to the words in which the Scripture represents the spiritual blessings thereby signified. There is reason to believe that immersion was more commonly practised at the beginning. But as the numbers said in the Book of Acts to have been baptized at one time,* and the circumstances in which they received baptism, seem to suggest that, even in those days, sprinkling was at some times used, the greater part of Christians have found themselves at liberty, in a matter very far from being essential, to adopt that practice which is most convenient, and most suited to the habits of colder climates.

To the administration of baptism there is commonly annexed, after the custom of the Jews when a child was circumcised, the designing the person baptized by a particular name. This is manifestly an addition to the directions given by our Lord, and consequently is not to be regarded as any part of baptism. A name might be given to a person at any other time as well as then. But the practice, of assuming the name by which we are commonly called at the time when we are initiated as the disciples of Christ, may serve to remind us of the obligations implied in the solemnity with which that name was given.

SECTION II.

ALL who use baptism consider it as the initiatory rite of Christianity, the solemn profession of the Christian faith. But this account of baptism, although true, appears to the greater part of Christians to be incomplete; and the grounds upon which they entertain a higher opinion of it are of the following kind.

Baptizing into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, while it certainly implies a profession of faith in them, also exhibits these three persons under certain

* Acts ii. 41.

characters, and in certain relations, which give an assurance of the communication of blessings to those who are thus baptized. Agreeably to this exhibition made in the form of baptism, are such expressions as these, "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved:"* "baptism saves us:"† "be baptized for the remission of sins:"‡ expressions which could not have been used unless there was an intimate connexion between this rite and the two characteristical blessings of the Gospel, viz. forgiveness of sins, and the communication of inward grace. The Apostle Paul, Romans vi. 4, 5, 6, illustrates this connexion by an allusion drawn from the ancient method of administering baptism. The immersion in water, of the bodies of those who were baptized, is an emblem of that death unto sin, by which the conversion of Christians is generally expressed: the rising out of the water, the breathing the air again after having been for some time in another element, is an emblem of that new life, which Christians by their profession are bound, and by the power of their religion are enabled to lead. The time during which they remained under the water is a kind of temporary death, after the image of the death of Christ, during which they deposited under the stream the sins of which the old man was composed: when they emerged from the water, they rose, after the image of his resurrection, to a life of righteousness here, and a life of glory hereafter. Here is a significant representation both of what the baptized persons engaged to do, and also of the grace by which their sins were forgiven, and the strength communicated to their souls: so that the action of baptism, as interpreted by an Apostle, rises from being a profession of faith, a mere external rite, to be a federal act, by which the mutual stipulations of the covenant of grace are confirmed. Accordingly, the same Apostle represents baptism as coming in place of circumcision. For to the Galatians, to whom he thus writes, v. 2, 3, "I Paul, say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing: for I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law;" he says, iii. 27, "as many of you

* Mark xvi. 16. † 1 Peter iii. 21. ‡ Acts ii. 38.

as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ." And to the Colossians, ii. 11, 12, he proves that circumcision was no longer necessary, by this argument, that their being buried with Christ in baptism was emblematical of that change of life, and that internal purity, which the rite of circumcision was meant to signify to the Jews. But the sign of circumcision is called by the Apostle, Rom. iv. 11, "a seal of the righteousness of the faith which Abraham had," *i. e.* a seal of his faith being counted to him for righteousness; and as the use of the sign was appointed for his posterity, it was to them also a seal of the covenant, confirming, to all who received it, their share in the promise made to Abraham. If baptism, therefore, supply under the Gospel the place of circumcision under the law, and bring Christians under the same obligations to Christ, as circumcision brought the Jews to the law, it must also imply the same security and pledge for the blessings conveyed by Christ.

These are the grounds upon which the greater part of Christians think the Socinian account of baptism incomplete. They agree with the Socinians in considering it as a solemn method of assuming the profession of Christianity; as a ceremony intended to produce a moral effect upon the minds of those who partake of it, or who behold it administered to others, and as in this respect most salutary and useful. But they consider it as possessing, besides both these characters, the higher character of a sacrament, an outward sign of an invisible grace, a seal of the new covenant.

However well founded this opinion may appear to be, much care is necessary to separate it from the errors of the church of Rome, who, applying to baptism their general doctrine concerning the nature of the sacraments, run into another extreme more dangerous and more irrational than the Socinian.

The church of Rome considers baptism, when administered by a priest having a good intention, as of itself applying the merits of Christ to the person baptized, with an efficacy sufficient to infuse into his mind a new character. Hence they deduce the absolute necessity of baptism in order to salvation, and the propriety of its being administered to a child, who appears to be dying, by any person

present, if a priest is not at hand. Hence, too, their distinction between sins committed before and after baptism. The corruption inherited from Adam, and all the actual transgressions which a person may have committed before his baptism, are, it is said, completely annihilated by this sacrament; so that if the most abandoned person were to receive it for the first time *in articulo mortis*, all his sins would be washed away, and he would enter undefiled into another world: but all sins committed after baptism, after the infusion of that grace by the conveyance of which this sacrament constitutes a new character, must be expiated by the sacrament of penance. Some of them, however, may be of such a kind as nothing can expiate. In this way the church of Rome contrives to magnify the power of both sacraments, to find room for each without detracting from the other, and at the same time to keep the people in a continual dependence upon itself, by an uncertainty with regard to the extent of the remission of sins.

Many Christians, who do not hold the opinions of that church, seem to approach to them in what they say of the immediate effect of baptism. They understand the words of our Lord to Nicodemus, "except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," as declaring that no person can be admitted to heaven who has not been baptized; and from the language of Paul, Titus iii. 6, "he saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost," they conclude, that a renovation of mind accompanies the act of baptism. Hence Augustine made a distinction between those who were regenerated and those who were predestinated. He maintained, that all who received baptism were regenerated or born again, so as to be delivered from that corruption which the children of Adam inherit: but that unless they were predestinated, they did not persevere in that state to which they were regenerated. Many of the Lutheran churches have not departed so far from the doctrine of the church of Rome concerning baptism, as to renounce this distinction, but place the efficacy of the sacrament in a regeneration, by which faith is actually conveyed to the soul of an infant; and by consequence they hold baptism to be indispensably necessary. It is a

remnant of the same doctrine in the minds of the people in this country, that produces the horror which they feel at the thought of a child dying unbaptized, or even living for a considerable time in that state. The liturgy, too, of the church of England, which, being formed soon after the Reformation, wisely studied to depart as little as possible from the ideas generally entertained, seems to proceed in this point on the language of Augustine. For it is said in the Catechism, that by baptism they who were "by nature born in sin are made the children of grace;" and in the office for baptism thanks are given to God, "that it hath pleased him to regenerate this infant with his Holy Spirit." Yet from both Burnet's Exposition of the thirty-nine Articles, and Secker's Lectures on the Catechism, books which are considered as standards in England, and which are useful to all clergymen, it appears that the church of England, far from approaching to the Popish idea of a charm wrought by baptism, agrees with us in holding the rational doctrine common to all the reformed churches with regard to the effect of this sacrament. This rational doctrine, which lies in the middle between the Popish and Socinian systems, may be thus shortly stated.

It is understood that all the external privileges and means of improvement, which belong to the members of the Christian church, are enjoyed by every person who has been baptised according to the institution of Christ; and it is hoped that every person, who, by the outward act, is entitled to the outward advantages of baptism, will also partake of the inward grace. At the same time, while we judge thus charitably of our brethren, we learn from the words of the apostle, Peter iii. 21, "that the putting away of the filth of the flesh" in baptism, the mere act of washing, does not save any person, unless it be accompanied with "the answer of a good conscience towards God." These words are directly opposite to the Popish idea of baptism working as a charm; and they seem to direct us to apply to this rite our general idea of the nature of a sacrament, by considering baptism as a federal act, in which those, who make the sponsion with sincerity on their part, receive a pledge and security that the blessings exhibited shall be conveyed to their souls.

We conceive that these blessings are not the annihilation of past sins, and the immediate infusion of a new character; but the forgiveness of all sins of which they repent, and those continual supplies of grace, which are necessary to keep their souls from evil. We make no distinction, therefore, as to the efficacy of baptism, between sins committed before, and sins committed after the administration of it. We think that the sin against the Holy Ghost, and total apostacy from Christianity are unpardonable, not because they are committed after baptism, but because the very nature of these sins excludes that repentance without which they cannot be forgiven. We consider justification by faith, through the righteousness of Christ, as including a right to the remission of every sin that is repented of, as well as a deliverance from the curse entailed upon the posterity of Adam; and we regard baptism as by no means the physical instrument of that justification, but only as a seal of it vouchsafed to us by God. Hence, although we account it a presumptuous sin to despise the seal, yet, as the remission of sins rests upon the promise of God in Christ, we do not account the seal so indispensably necessary, as to render the promise void to those who have not the means of receiving baptism according to the original institution. We think, that if the words of our Lord to Nicodemus have any reference to baptism, they only mean that a man does not bear the profession of a Christian, which is called "entering into the kingdom of God," unless he submits to the rite appointed by the author of Christianity. We think, that when the apostle calls baptism "the washing of regeneration," he only employs a phraseology suggested by the sacramental relation between the sign and the thing signified; that as circumcision is called the covenant,* because it was the sign of the covenant, so baptism receives a name from that which is certainly conveyed to all, who perform their part in this federal act. We think, in the last place, that our Lord guards us against supposing that baptism is essential to salvation; for, when he says, Mark xvi. 16, "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned;" he teaches, in the first

* Acts vii. 8. Gen. xvii. 13.

clause, that baptism does not save us unless we believe; and, by omitting the mention of baptism in the second clause, he seems to intimate that the want of it is not to be put upon a footing with the want of faith.

SECTION III.

To the view now given of the nature of this sacrament, there seems to arise an insurmountable objection from the practice of infant baptism. If baptism were merely a discriminating badge, we might conceive, according to the view which Dr. Priestley gives of this subject, that, when a father brings his children in their earliest days to receive that badge, he exercises the *patria potestas*. If baptism were a charm communicating a certain virtue which might be received by a child as well as a man, we might conceive its being early administered to be important for the improvement of the moral character, and necessary for salvation in case of an untimely death. But if baptism be a federal act, there seems to be the strongest reason for its being delayed till the party, upon whose sponsion its efficacy with regard to himself entirely depends, shall understand the nature of the sponsion. The intrinsic force of this argument against infant baptism appears to receive an accession of strength from its being observed, that all those, whose baptism is explicitly mentioned in Scripture, were persons capable of making that confession of faith, which our account of the ordinance implies. To the sect founded by Munzer, about the time of the Reformation, the practice appeared blameworthy for this further reason, that it admitted, into the church of Christ, persons of whose future life no certain judgment could be formed. They were accustomed, therefore, to delay this solemn act of admission into the church till that advanced period of life, when the former behaviour of a person might be supposed to afford satisfying evidence of his being worthy of that privilege: and they received the name of Anabaptists, because, considering early baptism as premature,

they rebaptized those members of other Christian societies whom they admitted into their communion.

The controversy concerning infant baptism has been discussed in many large treatises, and continues to be agitated with much keenness between the several branches of the ancient Anabaptists, and those who defend the established practice. The heads of the argument for that practice may be stated in a short compass.

God said to Abraham, "every man-child among you that is eight days old shall be circumcised."* By this command circumcision, which was the initiatory rite of the Abrahamic covenant, and which is declared by Paul to be the sign and seal of that covenant,† was administered to infants. If the covenant of grace be the same in substance with the Abrahamic covenant, and if baptism comes in place of circumcision, the presumption is, that Jesus, by the general words, "make disciples of all nations, baptizing them," meant that baptism also should be administered to infants. This presumption might indeed be destroyed by an express prohibition, or by a practice in Scripture directly opposite. But so far from any prohibition being given, there are many expressions in Scripture, which, although they would not of themselves warrant infant baptism, seem to intimate that the Jewish practice is to be followed. When Jesus, Mark x. 14, says to his disciples, who were rebuking those that brought young children to him, "suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God," his expression is calculated to mislead, if the dispensation of the Gospel was, in this respect, to be distinguished from the Mosaic, that it was not to comprehend little children. When Peter says, Acts ii. 38, 39, "Be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ; for the promise is unto you and to your children," he is speaking to Jews, who knew that the promise of Abraham was to them and to their children, and who would infer from his words that the blessings of the Gospel, and baptism, which they were exhorted to receive as the seal of those blessings, were no less extensive. And an expression of the apostle, 1 Cor. vii. 14, "now are your children

* Gen. xvii. 10, 12. † Rom. iv. 11.

holy," seems to imply, that amongst Christians, as amongst Jews, there is a communication of the privileges of believers to their children. In conformity to this principle, we read that the apostles baptized those who believed, and their household, Acts. xvi. 33, εβαπτισθη αυτος και οι αυτου παντες. We have reason to think that infant baptism was practised in very early ages of the Christian church; and, although many ideas concerning the indispensable necessity of baptism which we do not hold, may have contributed at different times to continue this practice, yet the principles upon which it rests are so universally acknowledged by Christians, that, with the exception of the different branches of Anabaptists, it has been uniformly observed.

It cannot be supposed by any reasonable person, that infants, at the time of their baptism, are brought under an obligation by an act which they do not understand. And yet to perform the act, and to rehearse the words without any corresponding obligation, would have the appearance of making baptism a charm. On this account, as under the Jewish law, parents, through whom their children inherited the blessings of the covenant, brought them to be circumcised, so Christian parents originally brought their children to baptism; and being accustomed to engage for them in many civil transactions, they were accustomed also in this solemn action to make those declarations, which it was supposed the children would have made, had they been possessed of understanding. When the parents were dead, or were incapable of acting, other persons appeared as sureties for the children, and there was thus introduced the practice, observed in the church of England, and in many other churches, of the children being presented by godfathers and godmothers, who are considered as sureties in addition to the parents. Our church, following out the dictates of nature, and the ideas upon which the children of those who believe are admitted to baptism, always requires the parents, unless they are disqualified, to present their children; and the nature of the sponsion made by them in this presentation is different from that prescribed in the church of England. There the godfathers and godmothers promise, in the name of the infant, "that he will renounce the devil and all his

works, and constantly believe God's holy word, and obediently keep his commandments." With us, the parents do not make any promise for the child, but they promise for themselves, that nothing shall be wanting on their part to engage the child to undertake, at some future time, that obligation which he cannot then understand. The practice of our church, then, leads us to regard the baptism of infants as a provision for perpetuating the church of Christ, and transmitting his religion to the latest generations. It is a privilege which children, born of Christian parents, enjoy, that their receiving the most important of all instructions, a pious and virtuous education, is not left merely to discretion or natural affection, but is bound upon their parents by a solemn vow; and whatever other attention parents may bestow upon the health, the improvement, and advancement of their children, they are guilty of impiety if they do not fulfil this vow, by being careful to afford them every opportunity for acquiring just notions and favourable impressions of religion.

In whatever manner infant-baptism has been administered, it rests with the children, after having enjoyed the advantages which flow from the practice, to confirm this early dedication. To give them a solemn opportunity of taking the vows of that covenant, of which, in their infancy, they received the seal, it was customary, from a very early period, for those who had been baptized in infancy, to be brought, at a certain age, to the bishop or minister, to give an account of the faith, in which, by that time, they had been instructed, and on declaring their adherence to that faith, to be dismissed with his blessing. From this practice arose that ceremony, known in the church of England by the name of confirmation, in which baptized persons, being come to the years of discretion, renew the vow made in their name at their baptism, ratifying and confirming the same in their own persons, and acknowledging themselves bound to believe, and to do all those things which their godfathers and godmothers then undertook for them. After this they kneel in order before the bishop, who, laying his hand severally upon the head of every one of them, offers a short prayer. The church of England agrees with us in thinking that there is no warrant for considering confirmation, according to the

doctrine of the church of Rome, as a sacrament; for there is no matter, the imposition of hands being only a gesture designing a particular person, and significant of good-will; there are no words appointed by God to be used in performing this action; and there is no promise of a special blessing. The church of England differs from us in considering confirmation, as not only authorized, but recommended by the actions of Peter and John. Being sent down by the body of the apostles to Samaria, they laid their hands upon those whom Philip had baptized in that city; after which action, accompanied with prayer, these persons received the Holy Ghost. It appears to us, that an action of the apostles, who had the power of conferring extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, does not form, without a particular command, a precedent for Christians in succeeding ages; and as the primitive salutary practice, which has been mentioned, was laid aside by some of the first reformers, upon account of the corruptions which it had been the occasion of introducing into the church of Rome, we do not feel ourselves bound to revive it. At the same time, Calvin expresses a wish that it were restored; and we are very far from condemning confirmation as practised in the church of England. Although we account it a ceremony merely of human institution, we think it such a ceremony as the rulers of every Christian society are entitled to appoint, according to their views of what may best promote the edification of those committed to their charge; and, as we have no such ceremony, we endeavour to supply the want of it, in the manner which appears to us effectual for the same purpose, and agreeable to the directions of Scripture. We think ourselves bound to exercise a continued inspection over the Christian education of those who have been baptized; that, as far as our authority or exertions can be of any avail, parents may not neglect to fulfil their vow. And when young persons partake, for the first time, of the Lord's supper, we are careful to impress upon their minds a sense of the solemnity of that action, and to lead them to consider themselves as then making that declaration of faith, and entering into those engagements, which would have accompanied their baptism had it been delayed to their riper years. We believe that, as they have enjoyed the advantages of infant-

baptism, and are thereby prepared for making "the answer of a good conscience towards God," all the inward grace which that sacrament exhibits will be conveyed to their souls, when they partake worthily of the other: for then the covenant with God is upon their part confirmed; and as certainly as they know that they fulfil what he requires of them, so certainly may they be assured that he will fulfil what he has promised.

Priestley. Barclay's Apology. Secker. Calvin.

CHAP. VII.

QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE LORD'S SUPPER.

THE other rite, to which Protestants give the name of a sacrament, is commonly called, after the example of Paul, 1 Cor. xi. 20, the Lord's supper, as the Lord's day is called, Κυριακη ἡμερα, Rev. i. 10. It derives its name from having been instituted by Jesus, after he had supped with his apostles, immediately before he went out to be delivered into the hands of his enemies.

In Egypt, for every house of the children of Israel, a lamb was slain upon that night, when the Almighty punished the cruelty and obstinacy of the Egyptians by killing their first-born; but charged the destroying angel to pass over the houses upon which the blood of the lamb was sprinkled. This was the original sacrifice of the passover. In commemoration of it, the Jews observed the annual festival of the passover, when all the males of Judea assembled before the Lord in Jerusalem. A lamb was slain for every house, the representative of that whose blood had been sprinkled in the night of the escape from Egypt. After the blood was poured under the altar by the priests, the lambs were carried home to be eaten by the people in their tents or houses at a domestic feast, where every master of a family took the cup of thanksgiving, and gave thanks with his family to the God of Israel. Jesus having fulfilled the law of Moses, to which in all things he submitted, by eating the paschal supper with his disciples, proceeded after supper, to institute a

rite, which, to any person that reads the words of the institution without having formed a previous opinion upon the subject, will probably appear to have been intended by him as a memorial of that event, which was to happen not many hours after. Luke xxii. 19, 20. "He took bread and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave it unto them, saying, this is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, this cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you." He took the bread which was then on the table, and the wine, of which some had been used in sending round the cup of thanksgiving; and by saying, "This is my body, this is my blood, do this in remembrance of me," he declared to his apostles that this was the representation of his death, by which he wished them to commemorate that event. The apostle Paul, not having been present at the institution, received it by immediate revelation from the Lord Jesus; and the manner in which he delivers it to the Corinthians, 1 Cor. xi. 23—26, implies that it was not a rite confined to the apostles who were present when it was instituted, but that it was meant to be observed by all Christians to the end of the world. "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." Whether we consider these words as part of the revelation made to Paul, or as his own commentary upon the nature of the ordinance which was revealed to him, they mark, with equal significancy and propriety, the extent and the perpetuity of the obligation to observe that rite which was first instituted in presence of the apostles.

There is a striking correspondence between this view of the Lord's supper, as a right by which it was intended that all Christians should commemorate the death of Christ, and the circumstances attending the institution of the feast of the passover. Like the Jews, we have the original sacrifice; "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us," and by his substitution, our souls are delivered from death. Like the Jews, we have a feast in which that sacrifice, and the deliverance purchased by it, are remembered. Hence the Lord's supper was early called the eucharist, from its being said by Luke, λαβων αρτον, ευχαριστησας εκλασε. Jesus when he took the bread gave thanks; and his disciples in all

ages, when they receive the bread, keep a feast of thanksgiving. To Christians as to Jews, there "is a night to be much observed unto the Lord," in all generations. To Christians as to Jews, the manner of observing the night is appointed. To both, it is accompanied with thanksgiving. And thus, as different expressions led us formerly to conclude, that the initiatory rite of Christianity comes in place of the initiatory rite of the Abrahamic covenant, we now find that the other sacrament of the New Testament also has its counterpart under the Old.

The Lord's supper exhibits, by a significant action, the characteristical doctrine of the Christian faith, that the death of its author, which seemed to be the completion of the rage of his enemies, was a voluntary sacrifice, so efficacious as to supersede the necessity of every other; and that his blood was shed for the remission of sins. By partaking of this rite, his disciples publish an event most interesting to all the kindreds of the earth; they declare that, far from being ashamed of the sufferings of their master, they glory in his cross; and while they thus perform the office implied in that expression of the apostle, τον θανατον του Κυριου καταγγελλετε, they at the same time cherish the sentiments, by which their religion ministers to their own consolation and improvement. They cannot remember the death of Christ, the circumstances which rendered that event necessary, the disinterested love, and the exalted virtues of their deliverer, without feeling their obligations to him. Unless the vilest hypocrisy accompany an action, which, by its very nature, professes to flow from warm affection, "the love of Christ" will "constrain" them to fulfil the purposes of his death, by "living unto him who died for them;" and we have every reason to hope that, in the places where he causes his name to be remembered, he will come and bless his people. From these views of the Lord's supper, the command of Jesus, "do this in remembrance of me," has been held in the highest respect ever since the night in which it was given; and the action has appeared so natural, so pleasing, so salutary an expression of all that a Christian feels, that, with the exception only of the Quakers, whose spiritual system, far refined above the condition of humanity, despises all those helps which he who knows our weakness saw to be

necessary, it has been observed in the Christian church from the earliest times to the present day.

This is the pleasing picture of the Lord's supper, which we wish always to present: and happy had it been for the Christian world, if this were all that required to be said upon the subject. But it has so happened, that an ordinance, which is the natural expression of love to the common master of Christians, and which seems to constitute a bond of union amongst them, has proved the source of corruptions, the most dishonourable to their religion, and of mutual contentions the most bitter and the most disgraceful. For while, with a trifling exception, all Christians have agreed in respecting and observing this sacrament, they have been very far removed from one another in their opinions as to its nature; and these opinions have not been always speculative, but have often had a considerable influence upon a great part of their practice.

Had the Scriptures represented the Lord's supper in no other light than as a remembrance of the death of Christ, there could hardly have been room for this variety of opinion. But as there are expressions, both in the words of the institution, and in other places of Scripture, which seem to open a further view of this ordinance, the different interpretations of these passages have given occasion to different systems. In the words of the institution, Jesus calls the cup "the new testament, or covenant, in my blood," which implies a connexion of some kind, in conceiving and stating which men may differ, between the cup drunk in the Lord's supper and the new covenant. He says also, "this is my body; this is my blood;" which implies a sacredness, of the degrees of which very different apprehensions may be entertained, arising from the connexion between the subject and the predicate of these propositions. The apostle Paul, in reciting the words of institution in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, for the purpose of correcting certain indecencies in celebrating this ordinance which had arisen in the infant Church of Corinth, speaks of the guilt and danger of eating and drinking unworthily, in a manner which to some conveys an awful idea of the sanctity of the Lord's supper, and to many suggests the most precious benefits as the certain

consequence of eating and drinking worthily. This suggestion appears to be confirmed by the incidental mention which Paul has made of the Lord's supper in the 10th chapter of that Epistle. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?" Lastly, there is a long discourse of our Lord in John vi. which some consider as nothing more than a continued figure, without any special relation to the Lord's supper, whilst others apply it either in its literal, or at least in its highest sense to this ordinance. Upon these passages of Scripture are founded the four different systems concerning the Lord's supper, of which I mean to give a concise view.

1. The first to be mentioned is that monstrous system which is held in the church of Rome, the several parts of which may be thus shortly brought together. It is conceived that the words, "this is my body, this is my blood," are to be understood in their most literal sense; that when Jesus pronounced these words, he changed, by his almighty power, the bread upon the table into his body, and the wine into his blood, and really delivered his body and blood into the hands of his apostles; and that at all times, when the Lord's supper is administered, the priest, by pronouncing these words with a good intention, has the power of making a similar change. This change is known by the name of transubstantiation; the propriety of which name is conceived to consist in this, that although the bread and wine are not changed in figure, taste, weight, or any other accident, it is believed that the substance of them is completely destroyed; that in place of it, the substance of the body and blood of Christ, although clothed with all the sensible properties of bread and wine, is truly present; and that the persons who receive what has been consecrated by pronouncing these words, do not receive bread and wine, but literally partake of the body and blood of Christ, and really eat his flesh and drink his blood. It is further conceived that the bread and wine, thus changed, are presented by the priest to God; and he receives the name of priest, because in laying them upon the altar he offers to God a sacrifice, which, although it be distinguished from all others, by being without the shedding of blood, is a true propitiatory sacrifice for the

sins of the dead and of the living—the body and blood of Christ, which were presented on the cross, again presented in the sacrifice of the mass. It is conceived, that the materials of this sacrifice, being truly the body and blood of Christ, possess an intrinsic virtue, which does not depend upon the disposition of him who receives them, but operates immediately upon all who do not obstruct the operation by a mortal sin. Hence it is accounted of great importance for the salvation of the sick and dying, that parts of these materials should be sent to them; and it is understood that the practice of partaking in private of a small portion of what the priest has thus transubstantiated, is, in all respects, as proper and salutary as joining with others in the Lord's supper. It is further conceived, that as the bread and wine, when converted into the body and blood of Christ, are a natural object of reverence and adoration to Christians, it is highly proper to worship them upon the altar, and that it is expedient to carry them about in solemn procession, that they may receive the homage of all who meet them. What had been transubstantiated was therefore lifted up for the purpose of receiving adoration, both when it was shown to the people at the altar, and when it was carried about. Hence arose that expression in the church of Rome, the elevation of the host; *elevatio hostiæ*. But, as the wine in being carried about was exposed to accidents inconsistent with the veneration due to the body and blood of Christ, it became customary to send only the bread; and in order to satisfy those who for this reason did not receive the wine, they were taught that, as the bread was changed into the body of Christ, they partook by concomitancy of the blood with the body. In process of time, the people were not allowed to partake of the cup; and it was said that when Jesus spake these words, "drink ye all of it," he was addressing himself only to his Apostles, so that his command was fulfilled when the priests, the successors of the Apostles, drank of the cup, although the people were excluded. And thus the last part of this system conspired with the first in exalting the clergy very far above the laity. For the same persons, who had the power of changing bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, and who presented what they had thus

made, as a sacrifice for the sins of others, enjoyed the privilege of partaking of the cup, while communion in one kind only was permitted to the people.

The absurdities of this system have been fully exposed by Calvin, Tillotson, Burnet, and the numberless writers, who, since the time of the Reformation, have directed the artillery of reason, philosophy, ridicule, and Scripture, against this enormous fabric. So much sound sense and logical acuteness have been displayed in the attack, that it may often be matter of wonder how such a system could be swallowed. To account for this, you must recollect the universal ignorance which for many ages overspread Europe, the natural progress of error, the credulity of superstition, the artifice with which this system was gradually unfolded, and the deep and continued policy, which, by availing itself of figurative expressions in Scripture, of the glowing language of devout writers, of the superstition of the people, and of every favourable occurrence, compounded the whole into such a form, as, when brought to maturity, engaged various interests in maintaining its credit. It appears, from ecclesiastical history, that it was not without much opposition that this system, the result of the growing corruptions of succeeding ages, was finally established. Although, from the beginning the Lord's Supper was regarded with such reverence as would easily degenerate into superstition, and, although in all ages of the church there had been an opinion, founded upon the words of our Lord, that communicants partake of his body and blood, yet when an attempt was made in the ninth century to define the manner of this participation, by saying that the body which suffered on the cross was locally present in the Lord's Supper, the attempt was resisted; and the rational doctrine, by which Joannes Scotus Erigena combated this attempt, was maintained and illustrated in the eleventh century by Berenger. Even after the name transubstantiation was invented in the thirteenth century, and declared by the authority of the Pope in the fourth Lateran council to be an article of faith, impressions made by the doctrine of Berenger were not effaced from the minds of men: and some, who did not venture to profess their disbelief of an article which the supreme authority of the church had

imposed upon all Christians, tried to avoid the palpable absurdities of that article, by substituting, about the end of the thirteenth century, in place of transubstantiation the word consubstantiation. This word was adopted by Luther at the beginning of the Reformation, and is commonly employed to express the distinguishing character of the second system concerning the Lord's Supper.

2. It appeared to Luther, from the words of the institution, and from other places of Scripture, that the body and blood of Christ are really present in the Lord's Supper. But he saw the absurdity of supposing that, in contradiction to our senses, what appears to us to be as much bread and wine, after the consecration as before it, is literally destroyed, or changed into another substance; and, therefore, he taught that the bread and wine indeed remain, but that, together with them, there is present the substance of the body and blood of Christ, which is literally received by communicants. As in a red-hot iron, he said, two distinct substances, iron and fire, are united, so is the body of Christ joined with the bread. Some of the immediate followers of Luther, perceiving that similes of this kind, which certainly contain no argument, did not throw any light upon the subject to which they were applied, contented themselves with saying, that the body and blood of Christ are really present in the sacrament, although the manner of that presence is a mystery which we cannot explain. Other followers of Luther, wishing to give a more accurate account of this article of their faith, had recourse to the *αντιδοσις ιδιωματων*, the communication of properties, which was mentioned formerly, as resulting from the union between the divine and human natures of Christ.* They said that all those properties of the divine nature, the exercise of which is essential to the office of mediator, were communicated to the human nature. It appeared to them, therefore, that as the mediator of the new covenant can only act where he is, and as the human nature of Christ enters into our conception of his being mediator, there is communicated to that nature what they called *omnipresentia majestatica*, by which

* Book iii. ch. 8.

the body of Christ, although a true body, might be in all places at the same time. Having thus satisfied themselves of the possibility of the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper, they found it easy to believe, that when these words, "this is my body, this is my blood," were pronounced, the body and blood of Christ being really present, united themselves to the bread and wine, and that both were at once received by the people.

The great proportion of Christians who hold what I called the Catholic opinion concerning the person of our Saviour, understand the *αντιδοσις ιδιωματων* in a different sense. They consider, that in consequence of the intimate union between the two natures of him who is both God and man, every thing that is true concerning the human nature may be affirmed of the same person, of whom every thing true concerning the divine nature may also be affirmed. So it may be said that the Son of God died, because he died in respect of his human nature; or that "the Son of man hath power to forgive sins," because the Son of man is also the Son of God. But considering each nature as true and complete by itself, they account it as impossible that any of the properties of the divine nature should belong to the human, as that any of the weaknesses of humanity should be imparted to the divinity of Christ. Other Christians, therefore, who believe in the divinity of our Saviour, while they admit that, in respect of his divine nature, he is always present with his disciples, believe also that his body, which was upon earth during his abode here, and which was removed from earth at the time of his ascension, is now confined to that place which it inhabits in heaven; and they consider ubiquity as a property inconsistent with the nature of body. The ubiquity of the body of Christ, which other Christians upon this ground reject, was not held either by Luther himself, or by all his followers, but was invented by some of them as a philosophical explication of that tenet, concerning the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper, which they derived from him.

It is not easy to form a precise notion of the manner in which this tenet is explained, or defended by the modern

Lutherans, who appear to feel the force of all the objections that have been urged against it. They disclaim the various errors and absurdities, which appear to us to be connected with ascribing to a true body a local presence at all times, in all places; and they employ a multitude of words, which I profess I do not understand, to reconcile the limited extension which enters into our conceptions of body with that omnipresence of the body of Christ, which appears to them to flow from the inseparable union between the divine and human natures. They reject the term consubstantiation, because that may seem to imply that the body of Christ is incorporated with the substance of the bread and wine. They reject another term also, which had been used upon this subject, impanation, because that may seem to imply that the body of Christ is enclosed, and lodged in the bread. But still they profess to hold that doctrine, which is expressed in all the standard books of the Lutheran churches, and is one of the principal marks of distinction between them and the reformed churches; that, besides the earthly matter, which is the object of our senses in the sacrament, there are also present *αδιαστατως*, in such a manner as not to be removed at any distance from it, the real body and blood of Christ; so that by all who partake of the Lord's supper *cum pane corpus Christi ore accipiatur et manducetur; cum vino autem sanguis ejus bibatur.*

This opinion, although free from some of the absurdities of transubstantiation, appears to us to labour under so many palpable difficulties, that we are disposed to wonder at its being held by men of a philosophical mind. It is fair, however, to mention, that the doctrine of the real presence is in the Lutheran church merely a speculative opinion, having no influence upon the practice of those by whom it is adopted. It appears to them that this opinion furnishes the best method of explaining a Scripture expression: but they do not consider the presence of the body and blood of Christ with the bread and wine, as imparting to the sacrament any physical virtue, by which the benefit derived from it is independent of the disposition of him by whom it is received; or as giving it the nature of a sacrifice; or as rendering the bread and wine an object of adoration to Christians. And their doctrine

being thus separated from the three great practical errors of the church of Rome, receives, even from those who account it false and irrational, a kind of indulgence very different from that which is shown to the doctrine of transubstantiation.

3. A system, free from all the objections which adhere to that of Luther, was held by some of his first associates in the Reformation, and constitutes the third system concerning the Lord's supper which I have to delineate.

Carolostadt, a professor with Luther in the university of Wittenberg, and Zuinglius, a native of Switzerland, the founder of the reformed churches, or those Protestant churches which are not Lutheran, taught that the bread and wine in the Lord's supper are the signs of the absent body and blood of Christ; that when Jesus said, "this is my body, this is my blood," he used a figure exactly of the same kind with that, by which, according to the abbreviations continually practised in ordinary speech, the sign is often put for the thing signified. As this figure is common, so there were two circumstances which would prevent the apostles from misunderstanding it, when used in the institution of the Lord's supper. The one was, that they saw the body of Jesus then alive, and therefore could not suppose that they were eating it. The other was, that they had just been partaking of a Jewish festival, in the institution of which the very same figure had been used. For in the night in which the children of Israel escaped out of Egypt, God said of the lamb which he commanded every house to eat and slay, "it is the Lord's passover;"* not meaning that it was the action of the Lord passing over every house, but the token and pledge of that action. It is admitted by all Christians, that there is such a figure used in one part of the institution. When our Lord says, "this cup is the new covenant in my blood," none suppose him to mean that the cup is the covenant, but all believe that he means to call it the memorial, or the sign, or the seal of the covenant. If it be understood, that, agreeably to the analogy of language, he uses a similar figure when he says, "This is my body," and that he means nothing more than "this is the sign of

* Exod. xii. 11.

my body," we are delivered from all the absurdities implied in the literal interpretation, to which the Roman Catholics think it necessary to adhere. We give the words a more natural interpretation than the Lutherans do, who consider "this is my body" as intended to express a proposition which is totally different, "my body is with this;" and we escape from the difficulties in which they are involved by their forced interpretation.

Further, by this method of interpretation there is no ground left for that adoration, which the church of Rome pays to the bread and wine; for they are only the signs of that which is believed to be absent. There is no ground for accounting the Lord's supper, to the dishonour of "the high priest of our profession," a new sacrifice presented by an earthly priest; for the bread and wine are only the memorials of that sacrifice which was once offered on the cross. And, lastly, this interpretation destroys the popish idea of a physical virtue in the Lord's supper; for if the bread and wine are signs of what is absent, their use must be to excite the remembrance of it; but this is a use which cannot possibly exist with regard to any, but those whose minds are thereby put into a proper frame; and, therefore, the Lord's supper becomes, instead of a charm, a mental exercise, and the efficacy of it arises not *ex opere operato*, but *ex opere operantis*.

An interpretation recommended by such important advantages found a favourable reception with many, whose minds were opened at the Reformation to the light of philosophy and Scripture. Its leading principles are held by all the reformed churches, as one mark by which they are distinguished from the Lutheran; and it was adopted as a full account of the Lord's supper, by that large body of Protestants who are known by the name of Socinians, because it coincides entirely with their ideas of a sacrament. It has been illustrated very fully in two treatises; the one written in the beginning of last century by Bishop Hoadley, entitled, A Plain Account of the Nature and Ends of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; the other written about twenty years ago, by Dr. Bell, entitled, An Attempt to ascertain the Authority, Nature, and Design of the Lord's Supper. The leading principle of the two treatises is the same, and may be thus shortly stated in the words of Dr.

Bell. "That the Lord's Supper is nothing more than what the words of the institution fully express, a religious commemoration of the death of Christ; which it is the absolute duty of every one who believes in Christ to celebrate: that the performance of it is not attended with any other benefits than those we ourselves take care to make it productive of, by its religious influence on our principles and practice; but that, of all mere acts of religious worship, it is naturally in itself adapted to possess our minds most strongly with religious reflections, and to induce as well as enable us to strengthen most effectually every virtuous resolution."

Bishop Hoadley and Dr. Bell avail themselves of the rational interpretation which Zuinglius gave of these words, "this is my body;" and of the plain meaning of the other words of the institution, "do this in remembrance of me." They consider the discourse of our Lord in John vi. as having no relation to the Lord's Supper. They interpret κοινωνια του αιματος, κοινωνια του σωματος του Χριστου, 1 Cor. x. 16, which we render "the communion of the blood, the communion of the body of Christ," as meaning nothing more than the participation of his body and blood, *i. e.* of the signs of his body and blood. According to them, the apostle refers in that chapter merely to the public profession of Christianity, which all who partake of the Lord's supper solemnly and jointly make; and the unworthy communicating, which is condemned in 1 Cor. xi. is confined to those who make no distinction between the bread and wine, which they receive at the Lord's supper, as signs of the body and blood of Christ, and the bread and wine which they receive at any other time.

This third system is not necessarily connected with the two distinguishing tenets of the Socinians. For those who hold the Catholic opinion with regard to the person of Christ and the atonement, may consider the Lord's supper as of no other advantage to the individual, than by leading him to remember that event, the devout recollection of which has a tendency to minister to his improvement. But it so happens, that all those who are called Calvinists have adopted a further view of the Lord's supper; and, as the thirty-nine articles of the church of Eng-

land were composed by Calvinists, that view is expressed as strongly in the articles which treat of the Lord's supper, and in the office for the communion, as in our Confession of Faith and catechism.

4. This farther view, which forms a fourth system concerning the Lord's supper, originated in the language of Calvin upon this subject. He knew that former attempts to reconcile the systems of Luther and Zuinglius had proved fruitless. But he saw the importance of uniting Protestants upon a point, with respect to which they agreed in condemning the errors of the church of Rome; and his zeal in renewing the attempt was probably quickened by the sincere friendship which he entertained for Melancthon, who was the successor of Luther, while he himself had succeeded Zuinglius in conducting the Reformation in Switzerland. He thought that the system of Zuinglius did not come up to the force of the expressions used in Scripture: and, although he did not approve of the manner in which the Lutherans explain these expressions, it appeared to him that there was a sense in which the full significancy of them might be preserved, and a great part of the Lutheran language might continue to be used. As he agreed with Zuinglius, in thinking that the bread and wine were the signs of the body and blood of Christ, which were not locally present, he renounced both transubstantiation and consubstantiation. He agreed farther with Zuinglius, in thinking that the use of these signs, being a memorial of the sacrifice once offered on the cross, was intended to produce a moral effect. But he taught, that to all who remember the death of Christ in a proper manner, Christ, by the use of these signs, is spiritually present,—present to their minds; and he considered this spiritual presence as giving a significancy, that goes far beyond the Socinian sense, to these words of Paul; "the cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ; the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" It is not the blessing pronounced which makes any change upon the cup, but to all who join with becoming affection in the thanksgiving then uttered in the name of the congregation, Christ is spiritually present, so that they may emphatically be said to partake, κοινωνειν, μετεχειν, of his body

and blood; because his body and blood being spiritually present convey the same nourishment to their souls, the same quickening to the spiritual life, as bread and wine do to the natural life. Hence Calvin was led to connect the discourse in John vi. with the Lord's supper; not in that literal sense which is agreeable to Popish and Lutheran ideas, as if the body of Christ was really eaten, and his blood really drunk by any; but in a sense agreeable to the expression of our Lord in the conclusion of that discourse, "the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life;" *i. e.* when I say to you, "whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me and I in him; he shall live by me, for my flesh is meat indeed," you are to understand these words, not in a literal but in a spiritual sense. The spiritual sense adopted by the Socinians is barely this, that the doctrine of Christ is the food of the soul, by cherishing a life of virtue here, and the hope of a glorious life hereafter. The Calvinists think, that, into the full meaning of the figure used in these words, there enter not merely the exhortations and instructions which a belief of the Gospel affords, but also that union between Christ and his people, which is the consequence of faith, and that communication of grace and strength, by which they are quickened in well-doing, and prepared for the discharge of every duty.

According to this fourth system, the full benefit of the Lord's supper is peculiar to those who partake worthily. For while all who eat the bread and drink the wine may be said to show the Lord's death, and may also receive some devout impressions, they only to whom Jesus is spiritually present share in that spiritual nourishment which arises from partaking of his body and blood. According to this system, eating and drinking unworthily has a further sense than enters into the Socinian system, and it becomes the duty of every Christian to examine himself, not only with regard to his knowledge, but also with regard to his general conduct, before he eats of that bread and drinks of that cup. It becomes also the duty of those who have the inspection of Christian societies, to exclude from this ordinance persons, of whom there is every reason to believe that they are strangers to the sentiments which it presupposes, and without which none are

prepared for holding that communion with Jesus which it implies.

This fourth system may, with proper judgment and discretion, be rendered, in a high degree subservient to the moral improvement of Christians; but there is much danger of its being abused. The notion of a communion with Christ in this particular ordinance, more intimate than at any other time, may foster a spirit of fanaticism, unless the nature and the fruits of that communion are carefully explained. The humble and contrite may be overwhelmed with religious melancholy, when the state of their minds does not correspond to the descriptions which are sometimes given of that communion. Presumptuous sinners may be confirmed in the practice of wickedness by feeling an occasional glow of affection; or on the other hand, a general neglect of an ordinance, which all are commanded to observe, may be, and in some parts of Scotland is, the consequence of holding forth notions of the danger and guilt of communicating unworthily, more rigorous than are clearly warranted by Scripture.*

I have now delineated the four capital systems of opinion, to which the few passages in Scripture that mention the Lord's supper have given occasion. I leave to your private study a critical examination of the several passages, and a particular discussion of the various arguments, by which each system has been supported. In prosecuting this study, you will find that the passage in 1 Cor. x. has suggested the idea of a feast after a sacrifice, as the true explication of the Lord's supper. The idea was first illustrated by Cudworth, in a particular dissertation, printed at the end of that edition of his Intellectual System which the learned Mosheim, a Lutheran divine, published in Latin, and has enriched with the most valuable notes. The idea was adopted by the ingenious Warburton, and applied by him, in one of his sermons, in a treatise on the Lord's supper, and in a supplemental volume of the Divine Legation of Moses, as an effectual answer to both the Popish and the Socinian systems. When you examine what Cudworth, Mosheim, Warburton, Hoadley, and Bell have written, you will probably think that this idea, like

* Hill's Theological Institutes, Part iii. 2.

many others which learned and ingenious men lay hold of, has been pushed too far; that, although there are points of resemblance between the Lord's supper, and those feasts which followed after sacrifices, amongst both heathens and Jews, yet the resemblance is too vague, and fails in too many respects to furnish the ground, either of a clear exposition of the nature of the ordinance, or of any solid argument in opposition to those who have mistaken its nature.

In the fourth system the church of England and we perfectly agree, as may be seen by comparing Articles xxviii. and xxix. with our standards. With regard to the differences between us, as to the times, the places, and the manner of receiving the Lord's supper, they are too insignificant, I do not say to be discussed, but to be mentioned here; "for the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." One circumstance only may appear to be important. The nature of the ordinance, as well as the words of Paul, "As often as ye eat this bread," implies this difference between the two sacraments, that while baptism is not to be repeated, the Lord's supper is to be received frequently. But as the spiritual religion of Jesus has, in no instance, given a precise directory for the outward conduct, the frequency of celebrating it is left to be regulated by the prudence of Christian societies. The early Christians were accustomed to partake of the Lord's supper every time that they assembled for public worship. It is certainly fit that Christians should not assemble for that purpose, without remembering the great event which is characteristical of their religion. But as that event may be brought to their remembrance by prayer, by reading the Scriptures, by the discourses delivered when they assemble, and by the sacrament of baptism, it does not appear essential, that the particular and solemn method of showing the Lord's death, which he has appointed, should form a part of their stated worship. In latter times, the Lord's supper is celebrated by some churches, at the return of stated festivals throughout the year; by others, without any fixed time, according to circumstances, either oftener in the year, or, in imitation of the Jewish passover, only once. There are advantages attending all the modes,

which it is difficult precisely to estimate; for if the impressions connected with this ordinance are oftener excited in one mode, it may be expected that they will be deeper and more lasting in another. Very worthy people have differed as to the obligation of communicating frequently, and consequently as to the distance of time at which such opportunities should be afforded to large societies of Christians. But at whatever time the Lord's supper is administered, all who hold the fourth system agree in thinking themselves warranted, by these words of our Lord, "this cup is the new covenant in my blood," to represent this ordinance as the appointed method, in which Christians renew their covenant with God. For while they engage, at a time when every sentiment of piety and gratitude may be supposed to be strong and warm in their breasts, that they will fulfil their part of the covenant, they behold in the actions which they perform a striking representation of that event, by which the covenant was confirmed; and they receive, in the grace and strength then conveyed to their souls, a seal of that forgiveness of sins, which, through the blood of the covenant, is granted to all that repent, and a pledge of the future blessings promised to those who are "faithful unto death."

Mosheim's Eccles. Hist. Cudworth with Mosheim's Notes. Warburton. Hoadley. Bell. Bagot.

CHAP. VIII.

CONDITION OF MEN AFTER DEATH.

THE concluding topic of the ordinary systems of theology is entitled *De novissimis*, i. e. *De resurrectione, extremo judicio, eternâ morte, eternâ vitâ.* It comprehends various questions respecting the condition of men after death. It might appear strange if I were to omit the mention of this topic; and yet I do not think any particular discussion of it necessary in this place. For all the questions generally arranged under this topic are included in former parts of the course, or turn upon principles that belong to other sciences, or are of such a nature as not to admit of any solution.

The great doctrine which theology clearly teaches, with regard to the future condition of men, is this, that by the righteousness of Jesus Christ there is conveyed, to all who repent and believe, a right to eternal life.* This is the only point which it is of importance for us distinctly to understand; for if God is to give eternal life to his servants through Jesus Christ, there can be no doubt that it will be a happy life, although the present state of our faculties may not admit of our forming an adequate conception of the nature of its felicity. The various images, which are used in Scripture, may indeed be employed with great propriety by persons of correct taste, and of a sober and chastised judgment, in filling up such a picture of a future state, as may minister to the consolation and improvement of Christians. But this is rather a subject of popular discourse than of theological discussion; because the data are not sufficient to establish, beyond

* Book iv. ch. 4.

doubt, any one position concerning the particulars that constitute the happiness of a future state, as the only position that can be seriously maintained by those who receive the Scripture accounts.

Besides questions concerning the nature of the happiness of heaven, there have also arisen questions concerning the state of the soul, in the interval between death and the general resurrection. But these questions belong to pneumatology. For if we believe, with Dr. Priestley, that the soul is not a substance distinct from the body, we must believe with him that the whole of the human machine is at rest after death, till it be restored to its functions at the last day; but if we are convinced of the immateriality of the soul, we shall not think the soul so entirely dependent in all its operations upon its present companions, but that it may exist and act in an unembodied state. And if once we are satisfied that a state of separate existence is possible, we shall easly attach credit to the interpretation commonly given of the various expressions in Scripture, which seem to intimate that the souls of good men are admitted to the presence of God immediately after death, although we soon find that a bound is set to our speculations, concerning the nature of this intermediate state. The subject is handled by Burnet, *De Statu Mortuorum et Resurgentium;* and it has of late been rendered an object of attention by the bold speculations of Dr. Priestley, and by an opinion which Law has expressed very fully in the Appendix to Considerations on the Theory of Religion, and which many English divines have not scrupled to avow; that immortality was not the condition of man's nature, but an additional privilege conferred through Jesus Christ, and that the Christian revelation of an immortality lays the chief, if not the whole, stress upon a resurrection.

One branch of the opinions that have been held concerning an intermediate state is the popish doctrine of purgatory, a doctrine which appears, upon the slightest inspection of the texts that have been adduced in support of it, to derive no evidence from Scripture; which originated in the error of the church of Rome in assigning to personal suffering a place in the justification of a sinner; and which is completely overturned by the doctrine of justification by faith, and by the general strain of Scripture,

which represents this life as a state of probation, upon our conduct during which our everlasting condition depends.

The certainty of a general resurrection is included in that right to eternal life which enters into the nature of the Gospel remedy. But it has been asked with regard to the resurrection, whether the same bodies rise. In giving the answer, we are obliged to resort to the principles of physiology, and soon find ourselves entangled in a dispute about words, upon this abstruse and undefinable question in metaphysics; what is the principle of identity in a substance undergoing such perpetual changes as the human body? A question has also been agitated, with regard to the eternity of hell torments. That view of the benevolence of the divine administration, and of the final efficacy of that benevolence, which seems to be implied in the opinion that hell torments are not eternal, naturally creates a prejudice in favour of it. But in speaking of the extent of the Gospel remedy, I stated the extreme caution with which we ought to speculate upon subjects so infinitely removed beyond the sphere of our observation; and the only thing which I have now to add is, that the Scriptures, by applying the very same expressions to the happiness of the righteous, and the punishment of the wicked, seem to teach us that both are of equal duration.

Burnet.—Priestley.—Law.—Horsley.—Confession of Faith.—Marckii Medulla.—Calvin's Institutes.—Secker's Lectures on the Catechism, and Five Sermons against Popery.

BOOK VI.

OPINIONS CONCERNING CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

CHAP. I.

FOUNDATION OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

THE followers of Jesus are united by the mutual consideration, the tenderness in bearing with the infirmities of others, the solicitude to avoid giving offence, the care to make their light to shine before men, so as to draw them to the practice of virtue, and the brotherly zeal in admonishing them of their duty, and in reproving their faults, which flow from the native spirit of the Gospel, which form the subject of many particular precepts, and by means of which Christians are said to "edify one another."

But their union is produced and cemented, not only by those affections which their religion cherishes, but also by their joint acknowledgment of that system of truth which it reveals. "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all."* As the public worship of the "one God and Father of all," who is known by the light of nature, forms one of the duties of natural religion, so Christians, who by bearing that name profess to believe in the person, whose interposition has opened a scheme for the salvation of sinners, are required to "confess him before men," and, by attending certain or-

* Eph. iv. 4, 5, 6.

dinances, to give a public testimony that they entertain the sentiments which are supposed common to all his disciples. The avowal of their belief of that system of truth, which may be learned from the revelation received by them as divine, is not left optional to Christians. He whom they acknowledge as their Master, has judged it proper to appoint that they shall solemnly be admitted amongst the number of his disciples by baptism, that they shall statedly join in different acts of worship presented to the Father in his name, and that they shall declare the reverence and gratitude with which they receive the characteristical doctrine of his religion, the redemption of the world through his blood, by partaking frequently of the Lord's supper.

If the whole Christian world could assemble together for the purpose of observing the institutions of Christ, they would form one visible society distinguished from the rest of mankind, and united amongst themselves, by employing the same external rites as expressions of their holding the same truth. It was not the intention of the author of the Gospel that this visible unity of the Christian society should be long preserved, because his religion was to spread rapidly throughout the world. But although, from the earliest times, different assemblies of Christians have, of necessity, met in separate places, yet the very act of their meeting, proceeding from the same general principles, and being directed to the same purpose, is such an expression of union as their distance from one another admits; and all the assemblies of Christians in every quarter of the globe, professing to hold the truth as it is in Jesus, and to worship God according to the appointment of Christ, are to be regarded as branches of what has been significantly called the catholic or universal church, the great society of the followers of the Lord Jesus, who would meet together if they could.

Separation of place, which the propagation of Christianity renders unavoidable, has conspired with other causes to produce an apparent breach of the unity of the Catholic Church. Different interpretations of Scripture have led to an opposition amongst Christians, in respect to the great doctrines of the Gospel; different opinions as to the mode of worship, and the manner of observing the rites of religion, have been accompanied by corresponding dif-

ferences in practice; and some who call themselves disciples of Christ have departed so far from the sentiments generally entertained by their brethren, as to judge all rites unnecessary.

If the followers of Jesus form a distinct society, and are bound to profess their faith by the observance of certain institutions, there will probably be found in the Gospel some regulations as to the time and manner of observing them, some appointment of persons to administer them, some principles of order, and some provision of authority for guarding the honour and purity of the Christian association. All this flows by natural consequence from the general idea of an obligation upon Christians to assemble together, for the purpose of professing their faith by the observance of certain rites. But if there is no such obligation, if religion is merely a personal concern, and all the intercourse of a Christian with his Saviour and his God may be carried on in secret, then the whole idea of church-government vanishes, and the followers of Christ, as such, have no other bond of connexion except brotherly love.

The first point, therefore, to which our attention must be turned, is an inquiry into the opinion of those who deny the perpetual obligation of the rites observed by other Christians, that we may thus ascertain whether we are warranted by Scripture to lay the foundation of church-government, in its being the duty of Christians to assemble together for the observance of those rites. This inquiry is a branch of the first general head, under which I arrange the questions that have been agitated concerning church-government. They respect either the persons in whom church-government is vested, or the extent of power which the lawful exercise of church-government implies.

King on the Creed.
Neale's History of the Puritans.
Madox against Neale.
Potter on Church Government.
Rogers's Visible and Invisible Church.
Rogers's Civil Establishment of Religion.
Benson.
Anderson against Rhynd.
Stillingfleet's Irenicum.

Cyprianus Isotimus by Jamieson.
Calvin's Institutes.
Burn's Ecclesiastical Law.
Atterbury.
Kennet on Convocations.
Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity.
Divine Right of Church Government, by London Ministers.
King on the Primitive Church.
Grey's Abridgment of Gibson.
Warburton.
Wake.
Sherlock on Jude, 3d verse.

CHAP. II.

OPINIONS CONCERNING THE PERSONS IN WHOM CHURCH GOVERNMENT IS VESTED.

THE different opinions respecting the persons in whom church-government is vested will be brought under review, by attending to the systems of the Quakers, the Independents, the church of Rome, the Episcopalians, and the Presbyterians.

SECTION I.

QUAKERS.

THE dangerous and delusive spirit, known by the name of fanaticism, was the principle of many sects which appeared after the Reformation, particularly of some of the rigid separatists from the church of England in the seventeenth century. It continues to tincture, more or less, the religious system of many individuals, and of different bodies of men: but the Quakers are the sect best known in our times, who profess what we call fanaticism as their pecu-

liar tenet, and who follow it out in all its consequences. It is the character of fanaticism to consider the revelation of the words and actions of Christ contained in the Scriptures, and all the ordinances and outward performances there prescribed, as of very inferior value, when compared with the immediate influence exerted by the Spirit upon the mind of the individual. It is conceived that this inward light constitutes a man a Christian, even although he has not the knowledge of the truth; that he is to feel the impulse of the Spirit in all the important actions of his life, but more especially in the worship of God; and that, walking continually by this perfect guidance, he would be degraded if he were obliged to perform any external action in a certain manner.

This principle easily extends its influence, both to the positive rights of Christianity, and to all the circumstances that attend public worship. The Quakers consider baptism and the Lord's supper, which other Christians think themselves obliged to observe, merely as symbolical actions, the one shadowing forth the inward purification of the soul; the other, the intimate communion which Christians enjoy with Christ: as figures for the time then present, which our Lord, in accommodation to the weakness of those with whom he lived, condescended to use before the age of the Spirit commenced; but as become unnecessary to all who understand the genius and the life of Christianity, since the outpouring of the Holy Ghost upon the day of Pentecost. In like manner, fixed times for the worship of God, stated prayer, and exhortations given by certain persons at certain seasons, are considered as intrusions upon the office of the Spirit, and are condemned as implying a distrust of his operations. It is allowed that Christians ought to assemble in the expectation of being moved by the Spirit, and that the act of assembling may prepare their minds for receiving his influence. But it is understood, that in their assemblies every one ought to speak as he is moved by the Spirit; that the office of prayer and exhortation is the gift of the Spirit; that the office continues during his operation; that it comes to an end when the impulse is exhausted; and that any person, who prays and exhorts without this impulse, acts presumptuously, because he acts without warrant. From

these principles it follows, that an order of men invested with the character, and exercising what we account the office of the ministry, is not only unnecessary, but also unlawful. It is obvious, too, that these principles are incompatible with a regular association. For although Christians who hold these principles may agree as to the time and place of meeting, yet as often as the inward monitor speaks to any of them, that individual is set above the control of his brethren, and amongst any number of individuals following out these principles to their full extent, there cannot be that subordination, without which it is impossible for a society to subsist.

When the Quakers first appeared in the seventeenth century, they avowed, without disguise, the principles which have now been stated. They declaimed with violence against the office of the ministry as sinful; and in that fervour of spirit which was cherished, partly by the novelty of their doctrine, and partly by the troubled state of the times, they committed various outrages against those assemblies of Christians, who performed the stated services of religion under the direction of fixed pastors. The experience of that punishment, which must always be inflicted upon those who disturb the tranquillity of others, soon taught the Quakers great circumspection of conduct; and the abilities of some men of learning and of extensive views, who early embraced this persuasion, gave their religious system a more plausible form, than it seemed at first capable of admitting. Barclay's Apology, published in Latin, in 1675, is a well-digested exposition of fifteen theses, which contain what he calls the true Christian theology. It is properly termed an apology; for, while it throws into the shade the most obnoxious tenets of the Quakers, it presents all that it does publish in the most favourable light, and with much art and ingenuity it attempts to give a rational vindication of a system which disclaims the use of reason. Barclay's Apology is the ostensible creed of the Quakers; and, in the spirit which dictated that book, they have, for more than a century, been accommodating their principles to the spirit of the times. While they have insured the protection of government, and obtained the most indulgent condescension to all their scruples, by uniformly distinguishing themselves

as orderly and peaceable citizens, they have adopted many internal regulations which are fitted to preserve their existence as a peculiar sect. There are, in every particular meeting, two or three of the gravest and most respectable men, who, under the name of elders, are invested with a degree of authority, whose character claims a kind of subjection from the brethren, who occasionally admonish or reprove, and who even address a word of exhortation to those meetings, in which none of the brethren finds himself moved to speak. There are monthly meetings of the congregations in a particular district, and quarterly meetings of a larger district; and there is an annual meeting in London at Whitsuntide, to which representatives are sent from all parts of England, Scotland, and Ireland, which receives appeals from the inferior meetings, and which issues an epistle addressed to the brethren in all the three kingdoms, and containing general advice, or such particular directions as circumstances may seem to require. Here, then, is a great political association; here are office-bearers, a subordination of courts, and a supreme executive authority; and although the power, both of the office-bearers and of the courts, is allowedly very limited, yet it proceeds so far as to deny, *i. e.* to exclude from the society, disorderly walkers,—those who are either contumacious, or whose conduct, in the transactions of civil life, is such as to bring disgrace upon the society; so that, in effect, it is all the power which any society purely ecclesiastical has a title to exercise.

But although a regard to their own safety, and the ascendant acquired at different times by the wealth, the talents, or the virtues of leading men of the persuasion, have formed the Quakers into a great political association, it is manifest that their religious principles have no tendency to keep them united. To Christians who consider a standing ministry as useless and unlawful, and who understand that every man is to be guided in the worship of God purely by the impulses which he feels, there can be no such thing as church government properly so called; and the regulations now stated have been adopted as a counterbalance to the disunion and disorder which are the natural consequences of this defect.

That we may not then regard the description of per-

sons invested with church government, concerning which the Christian world has entertained various opinions, and all the powers which these persons claim, as merely a human invention, it is of importance, before we proceed farther in this discussion, to satisfy ourselves that that annihilation of church government, which results from the tenets of the Quakers, is not countenanced by Scripture.

The principles of fanaticism are repugnant not only to the system of those, who consider the natural powers of man as sufficient for the discharge of his duty, but also to the system of those, who believe that the operation of the Spirit is essentially necessary for the conversion and the final salvation of a sinner. The great body of Christians, who hold that system, conceive that the operation of the Spirit is conveyed to the soul by the use of means. They consider the Scriptures as a complete unchangeable rule of faith and practice, and the ordinances of religion as perpetual institutions to be observed by all Christians, according to the directions of their master: and, far from thinking that these means are superseded by the grace given to any individual, they understand that this grace only enables him, in the diligent use of the Scriptures, and of the positive rites of religion, to attain the "end of his faith, even the salvation of his soul."

This opinion, with regard to the manner of the operation of the Spirit, appears, from the statement of it, to be sound and rational, and agreeable to the constitution of man. It implies that there is an orderly method of administering the rites of Christianity; and as the method cannot continue orderly unless there are certain persons to whom this office is committed, the existence of such a description of persons is a consequence which seems fairly to result from the opinion. When we proceed to try our conclusions upon this subject by their conformity with Scripture, the consequence now mentioned, as well as the opinion from which we deduced it, is found to receive every kind of confirmation.

Those whom the Scriptures suppose to be led by the Spirit are there addressed as in the full possession of reason, and in the habitual use of certain means. Our Lord, by choosing apostles, and sending them forth to make disciples of all nations, intimated that he was to employ in the

conversion of the world, not merely an immediate illapse of the Spirit, but also the ministration of men holding and exercising an office. Of the three thousand, who were added to the church immediately after the extraordinary effusion of the gifts of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, it is said, Acts ii. 42, ησαν προσκαρτερουντες τη διδαχη των αποστολων, i. e. *they continued to listen to the teaching of the apostles.* Paul gives Titus a charge to ordain elders in every city;* the office-bearers of different churches are occasionally mentioned; and a considerable part of the first epistle to the Corinthians is intended to apply a remedy to the disorders, which the abundance of spiritual gifts had occasioned in that church. For this purpose the apostle declares that all those gifts were distributed for the edification of the church; and he delivers this general rule, 1 Cor. xiv. 32, 33; "And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints:" a rule, which, when taken in conjunction with the occasion upon which it was delivered, and the reason upon which it is grounded, seems intended to furnish a perpetual preservative against that very confusion, which the Quakers experienced as soon as they presumed to disregard it, by exalting the exercise of the supposed gifts of individuals above the ordinary performances of a standing ministry. When they considered the spirits of the prophets as not subject to the prophets, the peace of their society was continually disturbed; and many of the regulations adopted in their political association were meant to apply a remedy to the disorder that was thus introduced.

There is no promise in Scripture of any future age like that which ushered Christianity into the world; and if stated teachers were required even in that first age, which may be called the age of the Spirit, because his operations were then visible in many that believed, it should seem that they will be more necessary in all succeeding ages, when his extraordinary gifts are withdrawn, and when, notwithstanding the pretensions of the early Quakers, or of the multifarious sects in modern times, founded on the principles of fanaticism, Christians have no warrant from

* Titus i. 5.

Scripture to expect any other, than that continued influence of the Spirit, by which he "helpeth our infirmities." It cannot be said that the office of a standing ministry, although fitly vested in the apostles, was meant to expire with them; for they committed "the form of sound words," which they had taught, "to faithful men, able to teach others also;"* and to these men they appear to have conveyed part, at least, of the powers which they derived from their master. The epistle to the Philippians is addressed "to all the saints at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons."† Peter thus exhorts "the elders; feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof."‡ In other epistles Christians are commanded "to esteem those that are over them in the Lord," and to "obey them that have the rule over them, and that watch for their souls."§ The epistles to Timothy and Titus direct them in the exercise of that authority which they had received, and mention office-bearers of different ranks in the Christian society, vested with special powers. In the book of the Revelation there are letters to the seven churches of Asia, *i. e.* to regular Christian associations then formed in seven different cities of Asia Minor; and the letters are addressed, not to the churches, although they contain much general exhortation, but to the angels, or ministers of the churches; which is a proof, that in every church there was a person distinguished from the rest, and qualified by his station to distribute the exhortations with effect.

There is one place in the New Testament, where we can trace the succession of Christian teachers beyond the immediate successors of the apostles. If you compare the 7th and 17th verses of Hebrews xiii. you will find that the apostle speaks in the 7th verse of persons then deceased, who had had the rule over the Hebrews, and had spoken to them the word of God; and in the 17th verse of persons then alive, who had the rule over them, and were at that time watching for their souls: so that the Hebrews, after having been illuminated by the apostles, and confirmed in the faith by a second set of teachers, were enjoying the ministrations of a third. The succession, which we are

* 2 Tim. ii. 2. † Phil. i. 1. ‡ 1 Pet. v. 1, 2.
§ 1 Thess. v. 12, 13. Heb xiii. 17.

thus able to trace in Scripture, is agreeable to the promise which our Lord made to his apostles when he left them: *και ιδου, εγω μεθ' υμων ειμι πασας τας ημερας, εως της συντελειας του αιωνος.* The duration of the promise was not exhausted by the time during which the apostles abode upon earth, but reaches to the end of that age which the Messiah introduced; and therefore the promise must be understood as conveying an assurance of the presence of Jesus with those, who, in all the periods of that age, succeed to the office of the apostles.

The same idea of the perpetuity of the office of the ministry is expressed by Paul in a remarkable passage, Eph. iv. 11, 12, 13. He had mentioned the gifts which Christ, when he ascended, received for men, and which he distributes to every one as he will. He states, as one immediate end attained by the distribution of the gifts, *προς τον καταρτισμον των αγιων, εις εργον διακονιας.* But this work, being, as the name implies, ministerial, or subservient to a higher end, must continue till that end be attained. The higher end is, the unity in faith, and the perfection in virtue, of all the elect of God; an end which the dispensations of providence and grace are carrying forward, but which, in the nature of things, cannot be accomplished during this state of trial. From the apostle, then, we learn, that till the end of the world, the work of the ministry is to continue, as we had learned from the promise of Jesus, that till the end of the world he is to be with those who are employed in that work.

These are the heads of argument which the members of the church of Rome, and of the Episcopal and Presbyterian churches agree in opposing to the presumptuous conclusion, by which a spirit of fanaticism would represent the offices of a standing ministry as useless; and the consent of the great body of Christians in the use of these arguments may encourage us to assume in the beginning of this discussion, as an established point, that the general idea of church government, and the existence of a particular description of men invested with that kind of rule which church government implies, are agreeable to Scripture.

SECTION II.

INDEPENDENTS.

THE opinion which falls naturally to be stated in the second place, concerning the description of persons invested with church government, is that which was held by the Independents of the seventeenth century.

Robinson, the author of the sect to which this name properly belongs, had been educated in that presumptuous fanaticism which regards the office of a standing ministry as useless. But conviction or expediency led him to adopt a more moderate opinion with regard to church government; and that opinion, after being improved and digested for a course of years, was published in 1658, in the declaration of their faith, then emitted by the Independent congregations in England. The leading principle of their system is thus expressed by themselves. "Every particular society of visible professors, agreeing to walk together in the faith and order of the Gospel, is a complete church, and has full power within itself to elect and ordain all church officers, to exclude all offenders, and to do all other acts relating to the edification and well-being of the church."*

According to this fundamental principle it is understood by the Independents, that any number of Christians, whom neighbourhood and agreement in opinion as to the great doctrines of the Gospel lead to assemble for public worship in the same place, possess within themselves all the power that is implied under the notion of church government. The whole body retains, in its own hands, the power of admitting and excluding members; but for the orderly administration of the sacraments, and the regular performance of various offices that may minister to edification, the whole body sets apart with religious so-

* Neale, iv. 164.

lemnity, certain persons under the name of pastors, teachers, or elders, who derive their title to act in that capacity solely from the nomination of the society, and who, in virtue of that nomination, are the only persons entitled to perform within that society the acts connected with their character. As every assembly of Christians is conceived to be a complete church, immediately under Christ, and independent of all other churches, those who adopted this scheme were originally called Independents; but as that name came to be employed in a political sense, and was applied, during the commotions of the seventeenth century, to many who entertained principles hostile to civil government, those who wished to hold themselves forth as peaceable subjects of the powers that were, and as distinguished from other Christians, merely by their peculiar notions of church government, chose rather to take the name of Congregational Brethren. The name implies all that is meant by the word Independents, when used in an ecclesiastical sense, and marks this as their principle, that every separate congregation has all the powers of church government, of which it delegates such portion as it pleases to its own officers.

This principle is held with different modifications by several of the more recent sects which have arisen in Scotland, and by a considerable part of the English dissenters. From peculiar tenets they may be known by other names, but in church government they are Independents; and although the spirit of the constitution of the two established churches in Britain is most opposite to Independency, yet some approach to it may often be discerned in the sentiments and the conduct of many individual members of both churches. Indeed it appears to me the prevailing error of the times in relation to church government,—the opinion which, without due care in fortifying the mind, there is the greatest danger of imbibing.

In order to prove their fundamental principle, the Independents attempt to show that all the churches mentioned in the New Testament were single congregations which met in one place. But you will probably be satisfied that they fail in the attempt. The labours of the Apostles in planting the four principal churches that are

spoken of in the book of Acts, Jerusalem, Corinth, Antioch, and Ephesus, the success of their labours, and the number of teachers and prophets who ministered under the Apostles to a multitude of believers, are mentioned in such terms as render it impossible for us to suppose, that all the Christians in any of the four cities could assemble together; more especially when we consider that the Christians were not at that time in possession of any public places of worship, and that they would be solicitous to avoid any ostentation of their number, because their meetings, instead of being authorised by the laws of the state, were obnoxious to the magistrate. Yet the different congregations, into which the Christians of every one of these four cities were from necessity divided, are spoken of in the New Testament as one body. For although the separate associations of Christians in different provinces are thus designed, "the churches throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria," * the plural is never applied to the Christians of one city, but we read of "the church which was in Jerusalem, the church at Corinth, the church at Antioch, the church at Ephesus;" so that whatever was the bond of union among the different congregations of one city, the Apostles seem to have considered them as constituting one church.

But even although we should allow the Independents the proposition which they attempt to prove, it does not appear that they would gain much. If, in the times of which the book of Acts gives the history, all the Christians of every city might conveniently assemble for worship in one place, such regulations as suited this scanty number could not be a proper pattern for after-times, when Christians multiplied beyond the possibility of meeting together: and if, in the one congregation which was formed at first, many individuals, and many families were united by their common faith under one government, this early union, which was all that the circumstances of the case required, is very far from implying any condemnation of that future union of different congregations, which their vicinity might prompt.

The state of the congregations described in the New

* Acts ix. 31.

Testament not furnishing Scripture-authority, or what was called in the seventeenth century, a divine right for the Independent form of government, the plea of authority must be set aside, and we are left to try the fundamental principle of this form by those general maxims which are founded in reason and Scripture.

In appreciating its merits there are three concessions which will be readily made by every impartial examiner.

1. We admit that the independent form of government is very much superior to the presumptuous, unconnected spirit of fanaticism; for it implies the perpetual obligation of the positive rites of Christianity; it provides, by the appointment of a particular order of men, for their being regularly administered; and it exhibits not a political association, but an ecclesiastical society possessing and exerting the powers which it believes to be founded in the institution of Christ, and which it considers as necessary for its preservation.

2. We admit that church government was instituted, not for the aggrandizement of any order of men, but for the edification of the people. If the form of government adopted by the Independents is radically defective, the defect does not lie in their mistaking the object of church power, but in their confounding the source from which it flows, with the purpose for which it is conferred. They were led into the mistake by their experience of what they considered as abuses of church power, what they accounted acts of oppression and invasions of the rights of conscience, under the ecclesiastical government of men who professed to derive their power from a higher source; and they thought that they should effectually guard against the introduction of such abuses in the separate societies which they formed, by declaring as their fundamental principle, that the power which was to be exerted for their edification resided originally in themselves, and was delegated by them to their own officers.

3. We admit that cases may occur where the principles of the Independents must be followed out in practice. If a body of Christians were, by any calamity, placed for a length of time in such a situation, that it was impossible for them to obtain the ministrations of a person regularly invested with the pastoral character,—placed in an island

without a pastor, and separated from all other Christian societies, it would still continue their duty to join in the worship of God, and to celebrate the rites of Christianity: but that these services might be performed in a manner the most orderly, and the most agreeable to the institution of Christ which circumstances permitted, it would also be their duty to call from among themselves the persons whom they thought best qualified to preside in the public worship, and to administer the rites; and it is not to be doubted that the blessing of God would supply the unavoidable defect.

But even after these three concessions are made, the Independent form of government remains liable to strong objections, in respect both of the mode of appointment to the office of the ministry which it enacts, and of the disunion of the Christian society which it implies.

In illustrating these two objections, which are intimately connected together, I shall state the substance of the treatises written in the seventeenth century, in opposition to the congregational brethren.

I. This method of conveying the office of the ministry by the act of the people not only is destitute of the authority of any example in the New Testament, but is contrary to the spirit of all the directions there given upon that subject. Our Lord chose men to be apostles, endowed them with the necessary qualifications, and then gave them a commission to preach and to baptize. We read in the short history of their progress, that they ordained elders in the churches. Paul speaks to Timothy of "the gift which is in thee, by the putting on of my hands; of the gift which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery:"* he says to Titus, "for this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee;"† and he enjoins Timothy to "lay hands suddenly on no man."‡ These passages, when taken together, seem to imply that the office of the ministry, which Timothy and Titus had received from Paul, and other office-bearers joined with him, was with like solemn imposition of hands to be conveyed by them to others. It is true that in Acts vi. the apostles de-

* 1 Tim. iv. 14. 2 Tim. i. 6. † Titus i. 5.
‡ 1 Tim. v. 22.

sire the multitude of the disciples to look out among them seven men of honest report to superintend, with the name of deacons, the daily ministration of their charity. But although there was a manifest propriety in desiring the people to propose the persons whom they judged worthy of being intrusted with the distribution of their charity, yet the men thus nominated did not begin the distribution till they received from the apostles a solemn appointment; and with regard to those offices in the church which were not, like the office of deacons, chiefly secular, but which implied the exercise of spiritual authority, there is not any passage, which, when fairly examined, will be found to intimate that it was conferred by the act of the people. One passage which is chiefly relied on, as giving countenance to Independency, is Acts xiv. 23; χειροτονησαντες δε αυτοις πρεσβυτερους κατ' εκκλησιαν. But besides that χειροτονειν, before the time of Luke, was used for simple designation, without the exercise of suffrage, as is plain from his own expression, Acts x. 41, it is applied in this passage, not to the people, but to Paul and Barnabas, so that whatever be the meaning of the word, it can only be considered as making known the part, which these disciples took in the appointment of elders.

Accordingly the qualifications of those who were to be made bishops, and elders, and deacons, are mentioned, not in epistles to the churches, but in epistles to Timothy and Titus, who are directed to the proper method of trying such as might be admitted to take part with them in overseeing the church of God. The judgment of the qualifications is vested in those who, having been themselves found qualified, may be supposed capable of trying others; their act, following upon their approbation, is the solemn investiture of those whom they have found worthy; and they are the instruments by which Jesus Christ conveys to that order of men, which he meant to continue in his church till the end of the world, the authority implied in the exercise of their office.

II. The second great objection to the Independent form of government is the disunion of the Christian society which it implies. It considers the followers of Jesus as constituting so many separate associations, every one of which cares for itself, is complete within itself, and has

only a casual connexion with others. If, therefore, in the exercise of the separate authority of any congregation, wrong be done to an individual, he is left, while he remains a member of that congregation, without the possibility of redress; and if neighbouring associations should quarrel, which, considering the caprice and violence of human passions, is perhaps not much less likely than that they will live in peace, no method is provided for terminating their dissensions, or for preserving, amidst these dissensions, the continuance of their agreement in any common principles. But this is directly opposite to the Scripture idea of the Christian society, or Catholic church, which is represented as "one body," professing one faith, separated indeed by the necessity of circumstances into associations meeting in different places, but retaining amidst this separation all the unity which is possible. To this Catholic church, founded by the labours of the apostles, spread in idolatrous nations by the preaching of those whom the apostles ordained, and still maintained and extended in the world by the ministrations of all the servants of Christ, the promises are made; for it, gifts continue to be distributed; and the rites, which the great body of Christians agree in celebrating, are the rites not of this or that association, but of the church of Christ. A person must receive baptism from a particular association; but, by being baptized, he becomes a member of the great society; or, in the language of the book of Acts, "he is added to the church." He must join in the Lord's Supper with a particular body of Christians; but by eating that one bread, and drinking that one cup, he holds communion with all in every place, who "show the Lord's death." When he forfeits by his own fault his right to be numbered amongst that body of Christians with whom he formerly associated, he ceases to be a member of the Catholic church; and he remains without the church till he be found worthy of being readmitted by those who had excluded him.

According to these views, the different meetings of Christians are branches of one society, united as parts of a whole; and the first thing which enters into our conception of the society is the whole, while the circumstances, which rendered it necessary for this whole to be divided,

are a matter only of secondary consideration. When, therefore, in our speculations concerning that government which "God hath set in the church," we begin with considering government in reference to the whole, and from thence descend to the several divisions, we follow the order of nature. Whereas, if, like the Independents, we confine our attention to the divisions, we lose sight of the unity of that which is divided; and, as we invert the process by which the society that we analyze was constituted and enlarged, we shall probably arrive at conclusions unfounded in fact, and very remote from the intention of the Author of the society.

If every association of Christians be viewed as independent of every other, it will unavoidably follow, that ordination is the act of the people; for whence is a separate unconnected body of Christians to receive a pastor, unless from their own nomination? But if we preserve the view of a great society divided into many branches, then it follows, that in the same manner as every one who is baptized becomes a member of the catholic church, so every one who is ordained, by the laying on of the hands of the office-bearers of the church, becomes a minister of the church universal. He is invested with that character, in a manner the most agreeable to the example and the directions contained in the New Testament; and by this investiture he receives authority to perform all the acts belonging to the character. He cannot perform these acts to the church universal, because it is nowhere assembled; and the separation of the church universal renders it expedient, that the place in which he is to perform them shall be marked out to him. But this assignation of place is merely a matter of order, which is not essential to his character, which does not detract from the powers implied in his character, and which serves no other purpose than to specify the bounds in which the church universal, by the hands of whose ministers he received the power, requires that the powers shall be exercised.

What is the most proper manner of assigning the limits for the exercise of the powers conveyed by ordination, is a question which has been violently agitated both in ancient and in modern times. It was the subject of the controversy which was waged for many centuries between

the Pope and the princes of Europe, about what was called the investiture of church benefices; and it is the same question which has appeared in Scotland under the form of a competition between patronage, a call by heritors and elders, and popular election. The decision of this question, in every country, depends upon civil regulations; and if the church proceeds without the authority of the state, to assign the limits of exercising ministerial powers, she introduces a collision between the civil and ecclesiastical governments. Her business is to convey the powers to those whom she finds qualified. By ordination they become ministers of the church universal; for, having been tried by a particular branch of the church, acting in the name of Jesus, and in virtue of the trust derived from him, they receive authority and a commission to perform all the acts, which belong to those who are called in Scripture ambassadors, stewards, rulers, and overseers. Subsequent to this authority and commission, and essentially distinct from it in nature, although often conjoined with it in practice, is the invitation or appointment, applying the exercise of the authority to a particular district of the church. The invitation, when Christians are not recognised by the laws of the land as entitled to their protection, is, of necessity, and of right, the act of the people to whom the person is to minister; but when Christianity enjoys the benefit of being incorporated with the constitution of the state, it comes, in consequence of that civil advantage, to be modified in such manner as the government of the state is pleased to direct.

You will find yourselves involved in inextricable difficulties upon many questions in church government, unless you are careful thus to separate in your minds ordination, which is the appointment of Jesus Christ, conveying a character by the instrumentality of the office-bearers of his church, from the election of a minister, which is the appointment of men applying or limiting the exercise of this character, in such manner as they please, and with more or less wisdom, as it happens. It is the leading feature in the system of Independency to confound these two; and you will find, in your future experience of ecclesiastical business, that all the approaches to Independency, which appear in the sentiments or the conduct of

particular persons, arise from their not keeping them perfectly distinct. Whenever ordination is considered as the act of Jesus Christ, by his office-bearers constituting a minister of the church universal, the idea of one great society is preserved. The whole may be diversified in outward circumstances, but it does not cease to be a whole; for, from this principle there result subordination to superiors, which is essential to church government, and a bond of union amongst those, who are so far removed in place as not to be amenable to the same earthly superior. But whenever ordination is confounded with election, the unity of the great society is lost; the whole is crumbled into factions; there is no legal redress for the wrong which may be done by small unrelated jurisdictions; and there is no constitutional mean of deciding the controversies, which, arising among the separate associations merely from their neighbourhood, may disturb their peace and imbitter their minds.

I have entered thus fully into the discussion of the Independent form of government, because, in canvassing its merits, I been led to lay down some fundamental principles of church government, in which Roman Catholics, Episcopalians, and Presbyterians, are agreed, and which we shall carry along with us in comparing their different schemes. These principles are the foundation of a distinction, which, although not expressed in Scriptural terms, appears to us agreeable to Scriptural views; I mean the distinction very early made between the clergy and the laity. We shall afterwards find, that this distinction has been supposed to imply powers and exemptions on the part of the clergy, to which no order of men derives any title from the Gospel of Christ; and a submission on the part of the laity, to which no order of men is there degraded. But the distinction is not the less real that it has been abused; and it is proper that it should be maintained, both in opposition to those, who add to all the other contempt which they pour upon the Gospel, by representing the Christian priesthood as a political contrivance, a continuation of the same craft which imposed upon the vulgar in the times of idolatry; and also in opposition to those Christians, who, professing to reverence the Scriptures, attempt to guard against the abuse of church power, and

to reconcile the mention made of it in Scripture to their notions of liberty, by representing it as given by Christ to the people, and transferred by them at their pleasure to those whom they choose. Against both, we Presbyterians join with the church of Rome and the church of England, in holding that the persons vested with church government derive their powers, not from the people, but from Jesus Christ by his ministers; and our church has, in her Confession of Faith, expressed this fundamental proposition in the following words: "The Lord Jesus, as King and Head of his church, hath therein appointed a government in the hand of church-officers, distinct from the civil magistrate."

SECTION III.

CHURCH OF ROME.

In stating the system of the church of Rome, with regard to the description of persons invested with church government, which is diametrically opposite to that of the Independents, it is necessary to begin with illustrating the distinction between those who are called Papists and those who are called Roman Catholics.

The Papists hold that the bishop of Rome, commonly known by the name of the Pope, has, as the successor of Peter, the prince of the apostles, a primacy over the great society of Christians; that he is the vicar of Christ upon earth, the visible head of the universal church, whose power extends over all its members; that as he may himself enact laws binding upon the whole church, determine all controversies by his own infallible authority, and either inflict censures or grant absolution according to his pleasure, so he is the fountain of pastoral jurisdiction and dignity, from whom all who exercise the powers of church government, in any district of the Christian world, ought to receive their commission, to whom they are bound to swear true obedience in the discharge of their office, and to whom they are accountable; that as their persons and their actions are in all things under his control, so the sen-

tences which they pronounce in the exercise of the powers committed to them are subject to his revisal; that appeals may be made from all ecclesiastical judicatories to the judgment of the bishop of Rome; but that he himself is not obliged to give account to any, and that from his sentence there is no appeal.

This is the complete system of church government avowed in the public confessions of their faith, by those who are properly called Papists. But this system is not held in its full extent by all who profess the doctrine, and adhere to the communion, of the church of Rome. The Papists derive their name from their attachment to the Pope, their belief of his infallibility, and their submission to his sovereign and uncontrollable power. Those who call themselves Roman Catholics, acknowledge that the bishop of Rome, the most dignified member of the church universal, and the successor of Peter, holds a primacy and superiority which they consider as a common centre of unity to the whole society, and to which they are willing to pay a becoming respect. But they do not allow the personal infallibility of the Pope; they consider the head as subject, no less than the members, to the decrees of the church universal; and if the head should attempt to infringe the constitutions of the church universal, should violate the rights of particular churches, or should err in matters of faith, they conceive that it is competent for a general council to correct his mal-administration; to maintain the liberties of the whole body, and of the several parts, in opposition to his encroachments; to defend the truth which he abandons; and, if other means do not appear sufficient, to provide for the safety or reformation of the church, by suspending or deposing him from his office.

This doctrine was declared by many general councils held in the 15th and 16th centuries, several of which proceeded to follow out their doctrine into practice, by pronouncing sentence upon Popes whom they considered as heretical or contumacious. It was the subject of endless discussions in those days, between the doctors of Italy, who maintained the infallible and uncontrollable authority of the Pope, and the doctors of France, who considered him as subject to the decrees of general councils. The

former boldly set the Pope above all general councils; the latter held that no *Papa* simply, but *Papa cum concilio*, is the head of the church. This last opinion, although it appears to impose a most reasonable restraint upon the exorbitant power of one man, was involved in many difficulties. For, even admitting the opinion to be true, it remains to be inquired, who is to summon the general council which is to control and try the Pope; who is to preside in it; who are to have the right of voting, and what constitutes a free general council, in whose censure of the first officer of the church the whole Christian world is bound to acquiesce? The difficulties attending these questions, which satisfy us in our days that a general council is a thing impracticable, were very much multiplied to those who, even while they wished to correct the abuses of papal power, professed to retain a high veneration for the bishop of Rome, as the successor of Peter; and it is not always easy to reconcile the connexion which the Roman Catholics are desirous to maintain with the Pope, and the doctrine by which they make him inferior to a council.

Notwithstanding these difficulties, however, this doctrine spread, both before and after the Reformation, through many parts of Christendom, the inhabitants of which wished to be delivered from the grievances of papal usurpation, although they were not prepared to follow the first reformers, so far as to depart from the received articles of faith, and to separate from the communion of the church of Rome. It became, even in the seventeenth century, the national creed of France, where the civil and ecclesiastical powers united in declaring, not only that the Pope is, in spiritual matters, subject to a general council, but that, in temporal matters, he has no sovereignty or authority over the rulers of those states who are in communion with him. These two positions constitute what were called, in those days, the liberties of the Gallican church. They have been uniformly and zealously maintained in opposition to the claims of the Pope, even while profound veneration was expressed for his person, and while the established faith of the kingdom consisted of the tenets of the Apostolical See of Rome, without any mixture, often without any toleration, of the opinions of the Reformers.

The Catholics of Great Britain have, of late, solemnly disclaimed that entire subjection to the Pope, which forms the distinguishing character of Papists: and instead of taking the name of Roman Catholics, which might seem to imply a connexion approaching to a dependence upon the church of Rome, they call themselves simply the Catholics of Great Britain. Even in those countries which profess still to believe in the sovereignty of the Pope, the changes upon the state of Europe, the progress of science, and the view of those blessings which their neighbours have derived from the Reformation, are undermining that fabric which was reared in times of ferocity and ignorance; and the papal power, which has already lost almost all its terrors to those who acknowledge its existence, will probably, at no very distant period, become, throughout the whole extent of Christendom, the tale of former years.

The progress of Popery is one of the most interesting portions of ecclesiastical history. The slow, but sure steps with which this power advanced, during a course of ages, to the greatness which it attained, the skill and artifice with which its pretensions were gradually extended, the multiplicity of interests which were combined in its support, and the profound policy with which it distributed through all Christian states many zealous champions of its claims—all together form a picture, which arrests the attention of every intelligent observer of human affairs, and is fitted to administer much useful instruction. It is not my province to fill up or to colour this picture. I have only to discuss the arguments upon which the Bishop of Rome professed to build his claims: and if these arguments shall appear to you a very slender foundation for such a superstructure, you must have recourse to the history of popery for an explication of the manner in which it was reared, and of the props by which it was supported; you must recollect that arguments, which the plainest understanding now perceives to be remote, inconclusive, and inapplicable to the subject, found the minds of men in such a state of preparation for receiving them, that they were assented to without being examined; and you must not be surprised, if an ordinary eye, now that the charm is broken, can discern all the deformity of an object, which

was long seen at a distance, through a deceitful medium, and was esteemed too sacred and too magnificent for close inspection.

The extent of the papal power receives a specious support from the unity, which it seems to give to the Catholic church. While the Independent form of government breaks one great society into many unconnected parts, the sovereignty of the Pope forms a common centre of unity to the various associations, into which Christians, from the necessity of circumstances, must be divided. If there is one visible head, whom all of them acknowledge, his authority, pervading the great society, controlling and regulating all ecclesiastical jurisdiction, is fitted to preserve that consent in articles of faith, and that uniformity in worship and rites, which, however agreeable to the nature of the Christian society, the wide extent of it seems to render impracticable without such a paramount authority. "The Son of God," says Bossuet, in his Exposition of the doctrine of the Catholic Church, "being desirous his church should be one, and solidly built upon unity, hath established and instituted the primacy of St. Peter to maintain and cement it; upon which account, we acknowledge this primacy in the successors of St. Peter, the prince of the apostles, which is the common centre of all Catholic unity."

The argument, when proposed in this general form, has a specious appearance. But there are many steps between the first position, that Jesus Christ intended his church should be one, and the last position, that the primacy of the Bishop of Rome ought to be acknowledged by all Christians; and when we come to analyze the argument, by tracing the connexion which the first position has with the last, the weakness of the whole cause opens upon us at every step.

Although Jesus often expressed a desire that his church should be one, and although an endeavour to maintain unity is earnestly recommended to his disciples, it does not follow that they were to have that kind of unity which arises from subjection to one visible head. Jesus is himself styled "the head of the body, the church."* His

* Col. i. 18.

prayer for those who should believe on him, through the word of the apostles, is this, "that they, Father, may be one in us."* When the apostle speaks of one body, one spirit, one faith, he speaks also of one Lord, that is, Christ.† As this Lord shall continue till the end of the world to rule in his kingdom, he may employ other means besides the government of a visible head to preserve unity. It is possible too, that knowledge of the truth, attachment to one Saviour, and the excitements of love and mutual forbearance inspired by his religion, may be the chief bonds of union which he intended should subsist amongst his followers; and that attempts to establish a stricter uniformity than what results from these principles may be attended with greater evils, and may be more repugnant to the spirit of the Gospel, than those breaches of unity which the power of a visible head might correct.

When perfect wisdom and perfect goodness are united in the character of a person, his power will be exerted for the best purposes; and the extent of his power may insure the harmony, as well as the happiness, of those who are subject to it. But such a character is not to be found upon earth; and all the experience of mankind teaches them to provide for the security of their rights, by imposing such limitations as may guard most effectually against the abuse of power. In one place, Matth. xx. 25, 26, our Lord warns his disciples against thinking that they were entitled to exercise in his name that kind of co-active authority, by which the princes of the earth maintain their sovereignty. In another place, Matth. xxiii. 8, 9, he warns his disciples against submitting their understandings to men, and requires the free and manly exercise of their own judgment, both as a testimony of the respect due to him, and as a security against their being turned aside from his doctrine. Although such warnings, when compared with other passages of Scripture, do not condemn church government in general, they certainly modify the authority that is to be exercised, and the subjection that is to be yielded; and therefore they imply a condemnation of a form of church government, which, by committing Christians in all places of the world to the

* John xvii. 21. † Ephes. iv. 4, 5.

inspection and the absolute government of one man, exalts him to a station, and intrusts him with an office, to which the natural powers of the wisest and the best of the sons of men are wholly inadequate.

It will be said, indeed, that inspiration can easily supply the unavoidable defects of human nature, and that the information and comprehension of the vicar of Christ upon earth may, in this way, be rendered commensurate to the extent of his office. But as our judgment of the proper seasons and degrees of inspiration ought always to proceed, not upon our own speculations, but upon our experience of what God has done; so when we attend to the fact in this case, it does not appear that such a measure of inspiration as the office requires has been bestowed, because the effects of the sovereignty claimed and exercised by the bishop of Rome have by no means corresponded to the advantages, which are stated as a presumption in support of the claim. Protestants hold that it has not preserved purity of doctrine; for they think they are able to prove that the faith of the church of Rome is, in many important articles, contrary to Scripture. All who read ecclesiastical history must acknowledge that it has not preserved the unity of the church; for the Eastern church never submitted to the authority of the Pope. Many parts of Europe have, since the Reformation, disclaimed all subjection to him; and there has, in all ages, been much difference of opinion, even amongst those who professed to believe that he is the vicar of Christ. Popes have contradicted one another upon articles of faith: the controversies respecting predestination and grace have agitated the Romish no less than the Reformed churches; and the attempts of the Roman Pontiff, by his authority, to define the ceremonies of religion, have often produced altercation, mutual hatred, and persecution.

Had the Roman empire maintained its ascendancy over the nations of the earth, advantages might have resulted from the primacy of a visible head of the church. If from the same city, which was the mistress of the world, the mandates of the supreme ruler of the Christian society had been transmitted to the separate associations in the most remote regions, this would have been a centre of unity, however discordant from the simple unassuming

spirit of the Gospel, yet certainly analogous to the political situation of human affairs, and admirably fitted to preserve an uniformity in religious rites. But when the Roman empire was dismembered, when independent princes arose throughout the whole extent of Christendom, and that civil government, which, in all the different modifications that circumstances may give it in different countries, is the ordinance of God, was vested in the hands of persons who had no connexion with Rome, the existence of a supreme ecclesiastical power residing in that city, and issuing its mandates to the ends of the earth, came to be attended with insuperable difficulties; and what in the former case might have been a centre of unity, was converted into a principle of discord, and a perpetual source of contention. A sovereign pontiff, who claimed from the clergy in every state an implicit obedience to all his injunctions, who could summon them at his pleasure from any part of the world, who reviewed all their sentences, and who could call to his own court the trial of any cause, which came in the first instance before them, was formidable to civil government. This foreign jurisdiction interrupted the orderly proceedings of every state; it weakened the authority of the magistrate; it created an interest in opposition to the public good; and it afforded various pretexts for superinducing very dangerous civil claims. Accordingly, the history of a great part of Europe, and particularly of Britain for a considerable time, is occupied with collisions between the jurisdiction claimed by the Pope, and that which the sovereigns of Europe considered as of right belonging to themselves within their own territories. In England the Reformation did not begin with the discussion of points of doctrine. It originated in resistance to the growing encroachments of the court of Rome; and it was accomplished by law, because the sovereign, the clergy, and the people felt that their rights were invaded.

Any person who recollects the submission which our Lord and his apostles uniformly yielded to the civil power, the many exhortations to obedience which the epistles contain, and the quiet accommodating spirit in all things not sinful, which the Gospel forms, will not readily believe that the method, which Christ adopted for preserv-

ing the unity of his church, was a method so hostile to the peace of society; and any person who considers that the Gospel, assuming the character of an universal religion, delivers, with consummate wisdom, doctrines and precepts which readily apply to all different situations, will perceive the inconsistency of supposing that it would create a perpetual dependence upon a particular city, in which one of its ministers resided; and by this single circumstance, would subject the disciples, who were to be gathered out of all nations, to many of the inconveniences of a local institution.

It appears, then, that when we come to reason from the unity of the church to the primacy of the bishop of Rome, there arise, upon general grounds, very strong objections against this specious argument; and we require the most satisfying direct evidence that a method of preserving unity, in itself so exceptionable, is, indeed, the appointment of Christ. The Papists assert that it is: and if they could prove what they assert, our notions of inexpediency would yield to his authority.

Their assertion consists of three positions, every one of which must be proved; that our Lord gave to Peter a primacy over all the other apostles—that Peter was Bishop of Rome—and that it was the intention of Christ, that the powers possessed by Peter should be transmitted to the Bishops of Rome in all succeeding ages. If they fail in the proof of any one of these positions, the primacy of the Pope becomes a human invention, which may be wise or unwise, but which cannot be regarded as the institution of Christ.

As to the primacy of Peter, they argue from Peter's appearing throughout the Gospels more ready to speak and to act than the other apostles, being often peculiarly addressed by our Lord, and often answering in the name of the rest; from his being placed at the head of every complete enumeration of the apostles, and called, by Matthew, "the first;" from our Lord's saying, "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not;" from his giving him a command to feed his sheep; and from these remarkable words, "Thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church; and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." As to the second position, they

argue partly from its being said by some ancient writers, that Peter lived for some time at Rome, that Peter and Paul founded the Christian church there, and that Peter died there; and partly from the expression at the end of his first epistle, "The church at Babylon saluteth you." It is known that Babylon, in the book of the Revelation, is the mystical name for Rome, the only city which answers to the description there given; and it is supposed that Peter, by using this name in his epistle, meant to give an intimation that Rome was the place of his residence. As to the third position, they find no support in Scripture. But they argue from tradition; from the deference which they say was in all ages paid to the Bishop of Rome; from the names given to him by ancient writers; from the probability that the successors of Peter would be distinguished above the successors of the other apostles; and from the miracles or other extraordinary gifts, by which his claim to infallibility and primacy has been attested.

Such are the arguments alleged in support of the three essential positions of the Popish system: I shall now give a specimen of the answers that are made to them.

As to the primacy of Peter, it is admitted that as in every body of men there are individuals who appear to take the lead of others, the fervour of Peter's spirit rendered him, upon all occasions, forward to speak; and that upon account either of this fervour or of his age he is not only called the first, but seems at some times to have acted as the foreman or speaker of the apostolical college. But it is not admitted that this implies any superiority of office; for, when our Lord first called the apostles, and when he spoke to them after his resurrection, and immediately before his ascension, he gave them the same commission, and invested them with the same powers. He said that they should sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.* Before their minds were enlightened, they disputed which should be the greatest; but, after the day of Pentecost, they appear to have understood that there was a perfect equality amongst them; and there is not, in the epistles, the most distant mention of any prerogative enjoyed by one of the apostles. Assem-

* Matt. xix. 28.

bled in a council at Jerusalem, Peter does not preside.* He is sent by the other apostles, along with John, to Samaria.† The work of the apostleship was afterwards distributed between Peter and Paul. To the former was committed the Gospel of the circumcision, *i. e.* the office of preaching to the Jews: to the latter the Gospel of the uncircumcision, *i. e.* the office of preaching to the Gentiles.‡ Paul says that in the discharge of his office "he was not a whit behind the very chiefest of the apostles;"§ and upon one occasion he withstood Peter to the face, reprehending a part of his conduct which he thought blameworthy.‖ The most striking circumstance in the history of Peter is the solemn denial of his Master, which does not appear to lay a good foundation for the infallibility of his successors, which was more culpable than the cowardice of the other apostles, and to which there is a reference in the prayer of our Lord for Peter, in the message sent him after the resurrection, "Go tell my disciples and Peter," and in the manner of giving him the charge, "Feed my sheep." The same charge is said to be committed by the Holy Ghost to all ministers or overseers, ποιμαινειν την εκκλησιαν. But because Peter had thrice denied his Master, he is solemnly re-instated in the office from which he had fallen, by our Lord's saying to him thrice, ποιμαινε, βοσκε τα προβατα μου.¶

In examining the strength of what the Papists account their impregnable fortress, the words addressed to Peter in Matthew xvi. 16, 17, 18, you will find that these words were spoken upon occasion of a question put to all the apostles, "Whom say ye that I am?" The answer is made by Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." But it is obvious that here, as at other times, he speaks in the name of his brethren as well as in his own name; and, therefore, although our Lord, in his reply, addresses the person who had spoken, it is natural to understand the promise which he gives as a reward of the confession, extended to all in whose name the confession had been made. Accordingly, one part of the promise, "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in

* Acts. xv.
§ 2 Cor. xi. 5.
† Acts. viii. 14.
‖ Gal. ii. 11.
‡ Gal. ii. 7.
¶ John xxi. 15, 17.

heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven," is repeated by the same Evangelist soon after, Matt. xviii. 18, and is there addressed to all the apostles. And a promise, which we understand to be the same in substance, "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained," was made to ten of the apostles after the resurrection.* It is understood by that great body of Christians who do not hold the primacy of Peter, that these two passages express all that is meant by the phrase, "I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven;" and, therefore, as no other powers but such as all the apostles enjoyed were at any future time communicated to Peter, or exercised by him, we hold, that, although our Lord says "I will give thee the keys," he is conveying, by these words, to all the apostles, the powers which we shall afterwards find to be implied in the lawful exercise of church government. There is another part, indeed, of the promise in Matt. xvi. which appears to be special to Peter,—"And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." These words, say the Papists, assign to Peter a dignity and an importance in the establishment of the Christian church, that cannot be common to him and the other apostles, because it is connected with his name. To this argument two answers are given. The one is, that this expression does not necessarily imply that the church was to be built upon Peter. As in the Old Testament there was often a close connexion in meaning between the name given to a person, and some transaction to which he had a special relation; and as our Lord was accustomed in all his discourses to refer to surrounding objects, or to things familiar to his hearers, so here, when he means to speak of the stability of his church, he alludes to the import of the name, which he had given to Simon when he called him to be a disciple. Hell is personified, representing the enemy and destroyer of mankind, who brought death into the world. The gates of hell are all the power and policy which this person can employ, because the gates of cities were strongly fortified,

* John xx. 23.

and they were the places where the wise men of the city met to deliberate. The gates of hell shall not prevail against my church, for it is founded upon that confession now made by thee, which, as the name given thee imports, is immoveable. He does not say, " Upon thee will I build my church." He does not even say, επι τω πετρω. But συ εις πετρος, και επι ταυτη τη πετρα οικοδομησω την εκκλησιαν μου, changing the substantive noun, it would seem, in order to intimate that he meant only an allusion to the name, and not the person to whom the name belonged. The confession made by Peter, " Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," is adopted by all Christians, and is the foundation of the Christian church. There would have been no Christian church, if this confession had not been made by some; and the Christian church will continue till the end of the world, because, as the proposition is true in itself, so there never will be wanting some, who believe and acknowledge the truth of it. All the early Christian writers understood ταυτη τη πετρα to mean the confession that Jesus is the Christ; and both the sense and the expression lead us to follow their interpretation.

But there is another answer to the argument of the Papists. If the allusion here made to the name of the person who uttered this confession, should be admitted to imply that there is a sense, in which the church was built upon him as well as upon his confession, still that sense must be so figurative and improper, as not to convey any power over the other apostles. For the only person who can be truly regarded as the foundation of the Christian church is the divine author of it. " Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." He is the rock upon whom the whole building stands secure; and, therefore, many understand ταυτη τη πετρα to mean Christ. The apostles, indeed, are sometimes conjoined with him upon account of their labours in making the first converts. " Ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone."* The wall of the New Jerusalem, which John saw, " had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb."† These two

* Ephes. ii. 20. † Rev. xxi. 14.

passages extend to all the apostles the honour given to Peter, and are to be interpreted in the same figurative sense. According to this figurative sense the promise was fulfilled. For as all the apostles laboured in laying the foundation of the church, so Peter had the honour of preaching the first sermon after the effusion of the Holy Ghost, by which 3000 souls were added to the church; and "God also made choice among the apostles that the Gentiles by his mouth," when he was sent to Cornelius, "should hear the word of the Gospel, and believe." In this sense it may be said that the keys of the kingdom of heaven, *i. e.* of the dispensation of the Gospel, were given to Peter; for his preaching opened the door by which all that believe are admitted, and the zeal, with which he declared to others the truth which he had confessed, was the beginning of the gathering of that church, which has continued to increase, and which shall never perish from the earth.

By one or other of the rational interpretations which I have mentioned, Protestants think they are able to remove the countenance, which this singular expression may appear to give to the high claims of a primacy in Peter over the other apostles; a claim manifestly contradicted by the whole strain of the rest of the New Testament, and by the analogy of faith.

On the other two positions I need not dwell. When you examine the evidence that Peter died bishop of Rome, you will find it extremely doubtful whether he ever was in that city. It is a question in the ordinary systems, *An Petrus Romæ fuerit, ibique episcopatum per plures annos tenuerit;* and the arguments for the negative are much the strongest. Innumerable difficulties, in point of chronology, arise from supposing that Peter resided at Rome; and his being bishop of that city contradicts the distribution made between Paul and him, by which Peter was the Apostle of the Jews, and Paul of the Gentiles. Paul makes no mention of him in his Epistle to the Romans. Peter never speaks of having been at Rome; and no reason occurs why the name of Babylon, in the end of his first Epistle, should be understood to mean any thing else than the ancient capital of the Assyrian empire, which

continued to be the metropolis of those districts, to the strangers scattered through which that epistle is addressed.

If Peter was not bishop of Rome, the popes are not his successors. But even admitting that he had been bishop of that city, their claim of deriving from him, and of continuing in all ages to enjoy, the primacy which they suppose our Lord conferred upon his apostle, rests upon evidence so slender, and so inapplicable to the subject, that it is fatiguing to expose the weakness of it. This third position, that the bishops of Rome, as the successors of Peter, possess the primacy by which he was distinguished, involves this manifest absurdity, that the apostle John, "the disciple whom Jesus loved," was, for the thirty years during which he survived the other apostles, subject to the bishop of Rome, the successor of another apostle. The position assumes as its grounds, a supposed expediency which we saw formerly does not exist, a power of working miracles which are known to be false, a succession which has often been interrupted, a tradition which, far from being authentic and uniform, often contradicts the position, and is often manifestly forged when it appears to speak in support of it. The infallibility and primacy of the Pope have been disclaimed by many bishops of Rome, and were for many ages disputed by the church: and we are under no necessity of having recourse to privileges derived from Peter, in order to account for the power which the bishops of Rome long exercised, because we can easily trace both the first introduction of that claim, and the manner in which it was extended and recognised. In the pre-eminence allowed by the councils of the church to the bishops of principal cities, in the ancient dignity of the city of Rome, and in the opportunities which the bishops of that city derived from the removal of the seat of empire to Constantinople, we find the circumstances which gave occasion to the claim. In a deep and persevering policy which accommodated its measures to the times, and availed itself of every favourable occurrence, we find a satisfying account of the progress and establishment of those spiritual and civil pretensions, which subjected a great part of the Christian world to a tyranny inconsistent with the genius of Christianity, degrading to

the human mind, and destructive of the tranquillity and prosperity of nations.

The Christians of former days, who struggled to emancipate themselves from this tyranny, were encouraged in their exertions by regarding the Pope, meaning by that name not any individual, but the pretended succession of vicars of Christ, as the antichrist, whose appearance and whose destruction are foretold in Scripture. Protestants continue to find in the characters of papal usurpation a literal fulfilment of various predictions concerning the corruptions of Christianity; and their faith in the truth of their religion is confirmed, by tracing the correspondence between the prediction and the event. It may therefore be useful to subjoin to the argumentative view of the third form of church government, that scriptural and historical view of it, which arises from attending to the train and connexion of the prophecies respecting this subject. I take, as the ground-work of the observations about to be made, the first part of 2 Thess. ii.

This second epistle was written at no great distance of time from the first, principally with a view to correct an error which prevailed among the Thessalonians. From a mistaken apprehension of the meaning of some expressions in the first letter, or by the artifice of some false teachers, they had been led to conceive that the day of judgment was at hand, and their minds being wholly occupied with the tremendous prospect, they neglected the ordinary business of life, and waited in consternation and dismay for the coming of the Lord. The apostle hastens to undeceive and relieve their minds. He declares that no expression ever used by him bore that interpretation; and he brings to their recollection some parts of his discourse when at Thessalonica, which might have satisfied them that this day of the Lord was not at hand, because he had given notice of a series of important events which were first to take place. These events are the apostasy, the revelation of the man of sin, his continuing for some time to act in the character which he assumed, and his destruction. I call it the apostasy, for the expression in our English Bibles, "a falling away," is by no means equivalent to the Greek word ἡ ἀποστασια, the departing from the faith, as it is rendered 1 Tim. iv. 1. corrupting the

simplicity and purity of the Gospel. The article prefixed to it, "the apostasy," marks not only that it would be great and signal, but that it had been foretold that it might be known, and that it was to be expected by those who studied the ancient prophets. In the progress of this apostasy, there was to be revealed or made manifest ὁ ανθρωπος της ἁμαρτιας, ὁ υἱος της απωλειας. This does not necessarily denote a single person. But as the high priest under the Jewish law meant the persons, who in succeeding ages bore that office, "the man of sin" may denote a succession of persons, who, as well as the apostasy, had been foretold, and so might be known; and who deserved that name, either from being infamous for their own wickedness, or very instrumental in promoting the wickedness of others. The title, "the son of perdition," having been applied by our Lord to Judas, and being transferred to this man of sin, may suggest that, under the semblance of a friend, he should betray his master, and certainly intimates the destruction ordained for those whom he corrupted, and for himself. This man of sin, or the succession of persons who deserve that name, is further described in the 4th verse, as an enemy to the truth, exerting his power in opposition to that which is truly the cause of God,—as assuming great state and dignity, exalting himself above those civil powers, which are called in Scripture Gods, above all that is held in reverence by men,—yet preserving the appearance of an ecclesiastic, for "he sitteth in the temple of God," which, as the Jewish temple was soon to be destroyed, can mean nothing but the Christian church. Continuing, therefore, outwardly a member of the church, and grounding his power upon the station which he held there, he was to claim divine honours, to take to himself the name and titles of God, and to show himself, to those who follow him, as a God. There is, in all this, a striking resemblance to the succession of persons, who, in the progress of the corruptions of the church of Rome, encouraged sin by many of their doctrines and practices, opposed the truth, assumed titles, and claimed powers, which belonged to no mortal. But bare resemblance is not sufficient to warrant this application of the prophecy. We must not only perceive that the description here given may apply to the succession of the

bishops of Rome, but we must discover limiting circumstances, which prevent us from applying the description to any other. Some such limiting circumstances the apostle seems to suppose were known to the Thessalonians, for he refers in the 5th verse, to an explication of the subject of his prophecy, which he had given when he was with them. But the reference is so short and obscure, that, whatever it might bring to the recollection of the Thessalonians, it conveys no information to us. The 5th and 7th verses give no hint of what it was, that restrained the manifestation of the man of sin. They only declare that the Thessalonians knew it. In order, then, to discover those limiting circumstances which are hinted at without being explained, we must recollect that all the prophecies of Scripture, from the beginning to the end of the Bible, form one continued scheme. The more ancient and the more recent predictions point to the same great dispensation of Providence, and they throw light upon one another. The prophecy in this chapter speaks of a corruption of Christianity, which was to attain its height in a future time, but was already beginning to work. Now the other inspired writers, who received power from God to speak of the same event, are Daniel the prophet, and John the Divine. Paul comes between the two; and his words may receive illustration from both.

There was imparted to Daniel, a man greatly beloved of God, a vision, Dan. vii. which was, in part, explained to him, and which, by means of that explication, is clearly understood to represent four great empires which succeeded one another, and the course of whose history led to the times and the fortunes of the church of Christ. The empire of Babylon is represented by the lion that had eagle's wings, upon account of the rapidity and extent of the conquests of Nebuchadnezzar. The kingdom of the Medes and Persians is represented by the bear, a voracious animal which thirsts after blood, because they exercised the greatest cruelty against the Babylonians, and are called by the prophet spoilers.* The empire which, by the rapid victories of Alexander the Great, was erected in a few years upon the ruins of the Persian, is represented by the

* Isaiah xxi. 2.

leopard, an animal remarkable for its swiftness. The fourth beast is known by the description to denote the empire of the Romans. But it has no particular name, because there is no animal that corresponds to the greatness, the strength, and the extent of the Roman empire. The fourth beast, as it is explained to the prophet, is a fourth kingdom, "diverse from all kingdoms," being not governed by a king, like the three former empires; but a republic, where the supreme power was vested in a senate and assembly. It "shall devour the whole earth, and break it in pieces," because the Romans subdued many parts of Europe and Africa, which were not conquered by Alexander, not being known to him: and although gentle, according to their principle, to those who submitted, brought the ravages of war upon those who opposed their power. The beast had ten horns, which are explained to the prophet to be "ten kings that should arise" out of the fourth kingdom. The barbarous nations, with whom the Romans had intercourse, being invited, by the different parties who contended at Rome for the government of the state, to assist them in their struggle, became acquainted both with the wealth and with the corruption of the Roman empire. They made incursions, obtained settlements, and established different kingdoms within the empire; and the number of independent kingdoms, which arose out of the empire, has been computed, by the most accurate examiners, to be ten. Now, as the prophet had seen among the ten horns of the beast "another little horn, before whom were three of the first horns plucked up," so it is explained to him, that, after the ten kings had arisen out of the fourth kingdom, *i. e.* after the Roman empire had been split into ten kingdoms, "there shall arise another king, diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three" of the ten "kings." This, by the place which it holds in the description, can be none other than the power of the Pope, which grew through a course of ages, so that from being a servant of the lowly Jesus, the successor of his humble apostles, he became a temporal prince, possessed of a large territory, and claiming to be the head of the whole Christian church. He was "diverse from the first," because his was a spiritual, as well as a civil power. The distinction was not always accurately marked between those claims which he

advanced as the bishop of Rome, and those which he advanced as a temporal prince; and the one assisted the other. Before the end of the eighth century, the Popes had, by different means, obtained three of the kingdoms into which the Roman empire was split, as an emblem of which they continue to this day to wear a triple crown. The little horn did then "subdue three kings." It is said also, that he had "a look, more stout than his fellows, a mouth that spake very great things, and that he shall speak great words against the Most High." This he did by calling himself infallible, interpreting Scripture according to his pleasure, requiring instant obedience to his decrees in opposition to the plain sense of Scripture. It is said, "he shall make war with the saints, and prevail against them, and wear out the saints of the Most High." This he did by the court of inquisition, by the wars which he excited against Protestants, and by the various bloody methods which he employed to oppress those who resisted his usurpation. It is said "he shall think to change times and laws." This he did by indulgences, by traditions, by new modes of worship, new articles of faith, and new practices, as penances, fasts, and pilgrimages. The prophecy concludes with foretelling the destruction of this strange power, and the triumph of the saints of the Most High over their oppressor; and it even sets a season for that event.

In this passage of Daniel, then, and there are others in his book of the same import, it is plainly foretold, that there was to arise a power of a very singular character in opposition to true religion; that this power was to arise in that part of the world which was properly called the Roman empire, and that it was to arise after the empire was divided into ten kingdoms.

The other inspired person, who speaks of this power, is John the Divine. In his epistles the expressions are general. 1 John ii. 18, "Ye have heard that antichrist shall come," antichrist, *i. e.* a person, or a succession of persons, in opposition to Christ, to his dignity, to his doctrine, and to the spirit of his religion. "Ye have heard it." It is one of the traditions of the Christian church, proceeding from the first preachers of Christianity, and diffused with the knowledge of the Gospel through the whole world. 1 John iv. 3, "This is that spirit of antichrist whereof ye have heard

that it should come, and even now already it is in the world." The spirit of this opposition is already working, although the time of its full manifestation is what you have been taught to look for as yet future.

Both these passages are general, and only furnish a name for that corrupt usurping power, which Daniel had described. But John is most particular in his book of prophecy. When he was in the Spirit in the isle of Patmos, he "saw the things which shall be hereafter;" and amongst other things there were shown to him, Rev. xvii. the future corruptions of religion, by the vision of a woman sitting upon a portentous beast, "having seven heads and ten horns." Here, as in Daniel, the vision is explained. For when John "wondered with great admiration" at what he saw, the angel told him "the mystery," *i. e.* the hidden import "of the woman and of the beast. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sitteth. The woman is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth. And the ten horns are ten kings which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. For God hath put it in their heart to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled." Here we are brought back to the prophecy of Daniel; for the city of seven hills which reigned over the kings of the earth, is the characteristical description of Rome. She was the mistress of the world; and the peculiarity of her situation, which her own poets, and all travellers mark, is, that within one wall she enclosed seven hills or eminences.

Septemque una sibi muro circumdabit arces.

The universal empire which she attained under the first of her emperors was, in succeeding ages, split into ten kingdoms, so that she is fitly marked by the beast with seven heads and ten horns. In the character which John draws of the woman, we recognise the features of that king, diverse from all other kings, who was represented in Daniel by the little horn. She has a cup in her hand, with which she teaches the nations to commit idolatry. She is "drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." She receives power from the ten kings,

and she rides them, *i. e.* directs them at her pleasure. Here is an antichristian power, and the time and the place of it are marked. It is to exist along with the ten kings, receiving its kingdom from them; and, at length, when they are tired of its usurpation, to be destroyed by them. It is the city of Rome, described in words, which to any person acquainted with history, can mark no other city in the world, the capital of that empire, out of the division of which the strange power was to arise. The latter prophecy then, according to the practice in the chain of prophecy upon all other subjects, has rendered the ancient more intelligible, and more pointed; and when we compare Daniel and John together, we can entertain no doubt that the seat of the antichristian power, which both agree in describing, was to be the city of Rome, after the division of the Roman empire.

So far Daniel and John. Now here comes in the Apostle Paul between the two, manifestly describing the same antichristian power of which they speak; a power which "opposeth, and exalteth itself above all that is called God, and showeth itself that it is God." His description is, in some respects, not so intelligible as theirs. We should not be able to learn from him either the time or the place of the appearance of this power. But we find him referring, for the explication of the short expressions which are here used, to what he had said when he was at Thessalonica, and to the knowledge of the subject which was generally diffused through the Christian church. "Remember ye not that I have told you these things. Ye know what withholdeth." We are warranted, then, we are obliged by the authority of the apostle himself, to take in this general knowledge as the commentary upon his words, *i. e.* we are obliged to make the prophecy of Daniel, and the information of which John says Christians were in possession, and which his prophecy extended,—to make them the interpreters of Paul; and when we do so, the meaning of this apostle appears plain.

Paul wrote to the Thessalonians when the Roman empire existed in all its glory, during the reign of some of the first emperors, and before any disaster had befallen the state, or any inroad had been made by the barbarians. But this flourishing condition of the empire withheld the

man of sin from being revealed. He could not be revealed, while the empire was one and undivided; for the prophecy of Daniel had expressly marked, that antichrist was to arise after the dismemberment of the empire; and the prophecy of John says, that he was to exist with the ten kings. It was many ages after the date of this epistle, that independent kingdoms were established in the empire; and it was not till the fifth century that Rome was taken, and the Roman empire destroyed by the barbarians. Then "he who letteth," ὁ κατεχων, "was taken out of the way." The power and dignity of the emperor being abolished, the bishop of Rome became the most conspicuous person in the western world. Availing himself of all the advantages which the weakness, the divisions, and the continual wars of the barbarous princes afforded him, he silently reared his head, extended his claims, enlarged his dominions; and before the end of the eighth century, was in possession of the territory of three of the ten kings, was acknowledged as a sovereign prince, and was submitted to as the vicar of Christ.

This interpretation of the obscure expression of Paul, which we derive easily from the words of the two other prophets, contains a satisfying reason why he wrote thus darkly. There would have been a great impropriety in a dutiful subject of the empire, as the apostle always professed to be, speaking openly in a letter which was to be circulated through the Christian world, of the dissolution of the empire, and of events respecting the Christians, which were to happen after that dissolution. Such a letter would justly have been accounted treason against the state, and might have exposed both the writer of it, and those who held it in veneration, to civil punishment. The apostle, therefore, darkly refers to what he had said at Thessalonica, and by this cautious mode of expressing himself avoids an unnecessary danger. But although he does not here explain what he had said, the knowledge of it was carried from Thessalonica, or from other churches where he had given the same instruction, through all the Christian world, and as the intimation agreed exactly with the prediction of Daniel, it came to be generally understood by the Christians, that, as soon as the Roman empire was dismembered, antichrist should appear. "There-

fore," says Tertullian in his apology, written in the second century, "we Christians are under a particular necessity of praying for the emperors, and for the continued state of the empire, because we know the dreadful power which hangs over the whole world; and the conclusion of the age, which threatens the most horrible evils, is retarded by the continuance of the time appointed for the Roman empire. We pray, therefore, that this evil may be deferred by the perpetuity of the state." Jerome, who lived to see Rome taken by the Goths, exclaims, "He which letted is now taken away, and from hence we understand that antichrist is near."

Although the revelation of the man of sin was in this manner delayed, or letted, for ages after the apostle wrote, yet the seeds of this corruption were sown in the Christian church even during his days; for he says, το μυστηριον ηδη ενεργειται της ανομιας. Mystery is the Scripture name for any thing that is secret, whose nature is not perfectly discovered. The Gospel is called "the mystery of godliness," because its divine and spiritual nature was unknown to the world at the time of its publication; and the corruptions of the Gospel are called "the mystery of iniquity," because they long worked secretly, before their influence in encouraging iniquity was manifest. We find many traces of them in the apostolical writings; contentions for pre-eminence; the abuse of Christian liberty so as to make it a pretext for vindicating rebellion and a contempt of the higher powers; false philosophy perverting the simplicity of the truth: the distinction of meats; the worship of angels; the observance of days and months, and other superstitious ceremonies; voluntary humility; affected mortifications; abstinence from things "which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving;" a respect for the traditions and doctrines of men; and an endeavour to substitute outward compliance with the commandments, in place of that "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, which is the kingdom of Christ." All this is popery. Under whatever name, or in whatever form it appears, it is the spirit of the "man of sin." The apostles testify against it in their epistles; and by the very strong censures with which they brand the first fruits of this spirit, they teach Christians to hold it in abhorrence where-

soever it makes itself manifest. So long as the Roman emperors were heathen, and the Christians were exposed to persecution under their government, this spirit was repressed, and could not do much mischief. But after the conversion of Constantine lent the aid of the civil magistrate to the decrees of the church, this spirit became conspicuous in the articles of faith, which were established by authority, and enforced upon the Christian world. The worship of saints and angels, many superstitious customs, and much foolish abstinence, became the law of the church; and this law was esteemed as of equal authority with the word of God. Still, however, the dignity and power of the Roman emperor restrained the complete manifestation of the "man of sin." But when a barbarous race invaded the seat of the Roman empire, levelled all that was held venerable in the state, and spread ignorance and anarchy over those lands which had been blessed with science and equal government, then was the opportunity of the "man of sin," τῳ ἑαυτου καιρῳ, his occasion, his favourable time; when meeting with no obstacle, and finding in the weakness, the divisions, and the brutality of the barbarous princes, a subject upon which his arts might be practised with success, "he, as God, seated himself in the temple of God, showing himself" to his deluded followers, "that he is God." The power which had been occasionally exercised by the general councils, under the protection of the emperors, and with a prudent regard to circumstances, was then boldly asserted as the right of the Bishop of Rome. By his own infallibility he declared what should be the faith of Christians; he enacted the discipline and ceremonies of the church; and he separated from Christ, and persecuted with the sword, those who refused to submit to his decrees. With strict propriety the apostle calls him, in the 8th verse, ὁ ανομος, the lawless one; since it is said of him by those, who, in their public writings, profess to give a true picture of the extent of his authority, that he is subject to no law, that by the plenitude of his power, he can make right wrong, and wrong right, and that he may do all things above law, without law, and against law. A time of anarchy was the season, καιρος, for the revelation of such a man; and the progress of just notions with regard to the rights of sovereigns and

the liberties of mankind must, in the nature of things, circumscribe such extravagant claims.

But before we speak of his destruction, let us attend to the intimation given in this prophecy of the arts, by which this "mystery of iniquity" was to be established. The apostle mentions two; false miracles, or "all power, and signs, and lying wonders;" and what he calls "all deceivableness of unrighteousness." One of the marks, by which the church of Rome says it may be known that she is the true church, is the power of working miracles. Accordingly, the legends of the church are filled with wonderful cures performed at the shrines of the saints, or by their bones and relics; and with stories more marvellous and more ridiculous, than any of those which we now read for amusement. In a superstitious and ignorant age, when it was the interest of the priests to deceive the people, and when it was the wish of the people to be deceived, exploits which appear to us palpable and gross forgeries were received without examination as real and great miracles. Indeed, in most of the instances, the forgery was so gross, that it has been acknowledged by several writers in the Romish church; and it does not seem necessary to suppose that the power of any evil spirit was exerted. But these lying wonders are here said to have been wrought κατ' ενεργειαν του Σατανα, because Satan is the father of lies; and their influence upon the minds of men in preparing them to receive and to retain the corruptions of the truth, was an instrument in which he delighted, by which he had held a part of the dominion which he exercised over the heathen world, and by which, after the appearance of Christianity, he kept many of the followers of Christ in nearly the same darkness, idolatry, and slavery, which formed the character of those to whom the true God had never been preached. The other instrument of establishing the usurped authority of the "man of sin" is styled πασῃ απατῃ της αδικιας: an expression which comprehends all the false doctrines, and delusive promises, and groundless fears, by which the church of Rome rules over the minds of its votaries; the forgeries of books; the perversion of Scripture; the arts of captious reasoning; the expectation of purgatory, that invisible fire which may be rendered longer or shorter, more intense or more gentle, according

to the pleasure of the Pope; that reliance upon the intercession of the saints, and upon the powers of indulgence and absolution said to be vested in the church of Rome, by which men are accommodated in the practice of iniquity, and relieved from the reproaches of conscience.

The effectual preservative against the influence of both these instruments is the "love of the truth." An acquaintance with the nature and evidence of the miracles of the Gospel exposes the falsehood of the lying wonders of the church of Rome; and "the truth as it is in Jesus," detained in faith and love, guards us against all "the deceivableness of unrighteousness." But, if men will not exercise their own understandings, they may be led into dangerous errors, and may, finally, fall into that condemnation from which the holding the truth would have delivered them. The apostle, however, is not to be understood as meaning, by the strong expressions which he has subjoined to this prophecy, that all who ever believed the errors of popery are certainly damned. So uncharitable a sentiment forms no part of the Protestant faith. We believe that many worthy, pious men, by the prejudices of education and custom, have been so confirmed in doctrines, which we know to be erroneous, that they were unable to extricate themselves. Yet they might be preserved by the grace of God from that unrighteousness, to which the same errors led many others; and there might be in their breasts a "love of the truth," although the thickness of the surrounding cloud kept them in darkness. The condemnation is pronounced against those, who "received not the love of the truth that they might be saved," who greedily embraced error, who cherished it because it encouraged them in sin, and were led, by means of it, to a security and an excess of transgression. Whether such were the teachers or the hearers of this corrupt form of Christianity, their condemnation is just; for although the guilt of those who lead others into sin is most heinous, yet no man is entitled to plead his being misled, as an excuse for the perversion of his understanding, or the corruption of his life. "For every man shall bear his own burden."

"The love of the truth" is the preservative against the usurped dominion of the "man of sin," and the diffusion

of the knowledge of the truth will prove the destruction of that dominion. For as the prophecies of the great apostasy, in Daniel and John, speak clearly of better times, when truth and righteousness shall flourish upon earth; so the apostle says, "Then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming." "The spirit or breath of his mouth" is a common Scripture expression for the word of God. The church of Rome forbade the people to read the Scriptures; and it was the ignorance produced by this prohibition that kept the world in bondage. But when our forefathers presumed, at the time of the Reformation, to open the Bible; when it was translated into the languages of all countries, and was everywhere read and explained, it shook the pillars of the dominion of "the man of sin." Many parts of the Christian world were soon emancipated from subjection to him. The temporal power which he had assumed over Christian princes and states was almost everywhere resisted; and even in those countries which still acknowledge him as the head of the Christian church, his spiritual pretensions are abated, and he is no longer the object of servile dread. And we are thus prepared for believing what the apostle declares, that the Lord, by the brightness of his coming, by some striking interposition of Providence, or by the instrumentality of men, shall refine his church from this corruption, and leave no portion of the dross. The times are in his hand. We presume not to say when it shall be, or what are the steps by which it is to be accomplished. But we wait with faith and hope for that clear explication of the obscurest words of the prophecy, which the event will give to some age of the Christian church: and we regard the diminution of both the temporal and the spiritual authority of the Pope, the progress of the Reformation, and the emancipation of many states which he once held in subjection, as pledges that all the parts of the prophecy will, in their season, be accomplished.

Barrow. Mede. Warburton. Newton. Hurd. Halifax. Bagot. Macknight on the Epistles.

SECTION I.

EPISCOPACY AND PRESBYTERY.

THE jurisdiction and supremacy of the Pope never was acknowledged by what is called the Eastern or Greek church, *i. e.* by large bodies of Christians inhabiting the eastern part of Europe, and a great part of Asia, or by those Christians that are found in some districts of Africa; and the era of the Reformation separated a considerable part of what had been called the Latin or Western church from the communion of the bishop of Rome. But the Protestants, although they united in combating that description of church government, which is given either by the Papists or by the Roman Catholics, did not agree as to what was to be substituted in its place. Minuter shades of difference in the external polity and visible form of Protestant churches may be overlooked. But there are two general systems of church government that obtain amongst Protestants, which are, in many respects, opposed to one another. We are accustomed to express the points of difference in one word, by calling some Protestant churches Episcopal, and others Presbyterian; and these two systems form an interesting object in Great Britain, because the one is established by law in England, the other in Scotland.

The Episcopal form of church government professes to find in the days of the apostles the model upon which it is framed. While our Lord remained upon earth, he acted as the immediate governor of his church. Having himself called the apostles, he kept them constantly about his person, except at one time, when he sent them forth upon a short progress through the cities of Judea, and gave them particular directions how they should conduct themselves. The seventy disciples, whom he sent forth at another time, are never mentioned again in the New Testament. But the apostles received from him many intimations that their office was to continue after his departure; and as one

great object of his ministry was to qualify them for the execution of this office, so in the interval between his resurrection and his ascension, he explained to them the duties of it, and he invested them with the authority which the discharge of those duties implied. "Go," said he, "make disciples of all nations, baptizing them, teaching them; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. Receive ye the Holy Ghost."*

Soon after the ascension of Jesus, his apostles received those extraordinary gifts of which his promise had given them assurance; and, immediately, they began to execute their commission, not only as the witnesses of his resurrection, and the teachers of his religion, but as the rulers of that society which was gathered by their preaching. In Acts vi. we find the apostles ordering the Christians at Jerusalem to "look out seven men of honest report," who might take charge of the daily ministrations to the poor, and to bring the men so chosen to them, that "we," said the apostles, "may appoint them over this business." The men accordingly were "set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them." Here are the apostles ordaining deacons. Afterwards we find Paul, in his progress through Asia Minor, ordaining in every church elders, πρεσβυτερους; the name properly expressive of age being transferred, after the practice of the Jews, as a mark of respect to ecclesiastical rulers.† The men thus ordained by Paul appear from the book of Acts and the Epistles to have been teachers, pastors, overseers of the flock of Christ; and to Timothy, who was a minister of the word, Paul speaks of "the gift which is in thee by the putting on of my hands."‡ Over the persons to whom he thus conveyed the office of teaching he exercised jurisdiction; for he sent to Ephesus, to the elders of the church to meet him at Miletus, and there in a long discourse gave them a solemn charge;§ and to Timothy and Titus he wrote epistles in the style of a superior.

As Paul unquestionably conceived that there belonged to him, as an apostle, an authority over other office-bearers

* Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. John xx. 21, 22. † Acts xiv. 23.
‡ 2 Tim. i. 6. § Acts xx. 17—35.

of the church, so his Epistles contain two examples of a delegation of that authority. He not only directs Timothy, whom he had besought to abide at Ephesus, how to behave himself in the house of God as a minister, but he sets him over other ministers. He empowers him to ordain men to the work of the ministry. 2 Tim. ii. 2. "The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." He gives him directions about the ordination of bishops and deacons: he places both these kinds of office-bearers in Ephesus under his inspection, instructing him in what manner to receive an accusation against an elder who laboured in word and doctrine; and he commands him to charge some that they teach no other doctrine, but the form of sound words. In like manner, he says to Titus, i. 5. "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that were wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee." He describes to Titus the qualifications of a bishop or elder, making him the judge how far any person in Crete was possessed of these qualifications: he gives him authority over all orders of Christians there, and he empowers him to reject heretics.

Here, then, is that apostle, with whose actions we are best acquainted, seemingly aware that there would be continual occasion in the Christian church for the exercise of that authority over pastors and teachers, which the Apostles had derived from the Lord Jesus; and by these two examples of a delegation given during his lifetime, preparing the world for beholding that authority exercised by the successors of the Apostles in all ages.

Accordingly the earliest Christian writers tell us that the Apostles, to prevent contention, appointed bishops and deacons; giving orders too, that upon their death, other approved men should succeed in their ministry. We are told that the other Apostles constituted their first fruits, *i. e.* their first disciples, after they had proved them by the Spirit, bishops and deacons of those who were to believe; and that the Apostle John, who survived the rest, after returning from Patmos, the place of his banishment, went about the neighbouring nations, ordaining bishops, establishing whole churches, and setting apart

particular persons for the ministry as they were pointed out to him by the Spirit. As bishops are mentioned in the earliest times, so ecclesiastical history records the succession of bishops through many ages; and even during the first three centuries, before Christianity was incorporated with the state, every city, where the multitude of Christians required a number of pastors to perform the stated offices, presents to us, as far as we can gather from contemporary writers, an appearance very much the same with that of the church of Jerusalem in the days of the Apostles. The Apostle James seems to have resided in that city. But there is also mention of the elders of the church, who, according to the Scripture representation of elders, must have discharged the ministerial office, but over whom the Apostle James presided. So in Carthage, where Cyprian was bishop, and in every other Christian city of which we have particular accounts, there was a college of presbyters; and there was one person who had not only precedency, but jurisdiction and authority over the rest. They were his council in matters relating to the church, and they were qualified to preach, to baptize, and to administer the Lord's Supper; but they could do nothing without his permission and authority. It is a principle in Christian antiquity, εἷς ἐπισκοπος, μια εκκλησια. The one bishop had the care of all the Christians, who, although they met in separate congregations, constituted one church; and he had the inspection of the pastors, who, having received ordination from the bishop, officiated in the separate congregations, performed the several parts of duty which he prescribed to them, and were accountable to him for their conduct.

In continuation of this primitive institution we find episcopacy in all corners of the church of Christ. Until the time of the Reformation there were in every Christian state persons with the name, the rank, and the authority of bishops; and the existence of such persons was not considered as an innovation, but as an establishment, which, by means of catalogues preserved in ecclesiastical writers, may be traced back to the days of the Apostles.

Upon the principles which have now been stated it is understood, according to the Episcopal form of government, that there is in the church a superior order of

office-bearers, the successors of the Apostles, who possess in their own persons the right of ordination and jurisdiction, and who are called ἐπισκοποι, as being the overseers not only of the people, but also of the clergy; and an inferior order of ministers, called presbyters, the literal translation of the word πρεσβυτεροι, which is rendered in our English Bibles elders, persons who receive, from the ordination of the bishop, power to preach and to administer the sacraments, who are set over the people, but are themselves under the government of the bishop, and have no right to convey to others the sacred office which he gives them authority to exercise under him. According to a phrase used by Charles I., who was by no means an unlearned defender of that form of government to which he was a martyr, the presbyters are *episcopi gregis;* but the bishops are *episcopi gregis et pastorum.*

In what manner bishops of a province or nation are associated amongst themselves, and what degree of subordination subsists between them and their metropolitans or archbishops, is generally understood to be a matter of civil regulation, depending upon mutual agreement, or upon national establishment. But the authority of a bishop within his own diocese, the word employed to denote the extent of territory committed to his care, his jurisdiction over all the Christians that live in it, and his superintendence of the clergy that officiate there, is conceived to be a right conveyed to him by succession from the Apostles, in the exercise of which he may be supported by the civil magistrate, but which is itself founded upon the word of God, and is agreeable to the ancient and uninterrupted practice of the Christian church.

The Presbyterian form of church government professes, like the Episcopal, to find, in the times of the Apostles, the model upon which it is framed.

In order to perceive how two opposite forms can claim to be derived from the same origin, the point at which they separate must be carefully marked. Both Episcopalians and Presbyterians agree, that amongst the various powers committed to the Apostles there was an authority vested in them, as the governors of the church, to exercise the most ample inspection and jurisdiction over those

whom they ordained, as well as over the Christian people: and both agree that there are instances in Scripture of a delegation of some part at least of this governing power. But they differ as to the description of the persons to whom the delegation was made. Timothy and Titus, who, by the directions contained in the Epistles addressed to them, were unquestionably constituted *Episcopi et pastorum et gregis*, are accounted by the Episcopalians, the stated bishops of Ephesus and Crete, office-bearers of the same order with the succession of bishops in other ages.

According to the Presbyterians, Timothy and Titus were extraordinary office-bearers, suited to the infant state of the Christian church, who are called in the New Testament evangelists, and whose office is thus described in the fourth century by Eusebius. "They, laying only the foundation of the faith in places which had not heard the Gospel, and appointing other pastors to whom they delivered the cultivation of these new plants, passed on themselves to other countries and nations."

The proof that Timothy and Titus were of the order of evangelists is of this kind. Timothy is mentioned in the Acts and the Epistles as an attendant of Paul in his different journeys. Paul says, 1 Tim. i. 3, that he had besought him to abide still at Ephesus, which implies that this was not his fixed station, where a sense of duty called him to reside, but a place, where the prospect of his doing some special service rendered a temporary stay expedient. In 2 Tim. iv. 5, Timothy is called an evangelist, ἔργον ποίησον εὐαγγελιστοῦ. Paul appoints him, 2 Tim. iv. 9, 21, to come to him at Rome, from whence the second Epistle was written, and to come before winter; which implies that he was not soon to return to Ephesus. From these circumstances it appears probable, that, although in the postscript of the second Epistle, which being no part of the canon of Scripture, is of no authority, Timothy is styled the first Bishop of the church of the Ephesians, and although those who have made catalogues of bishops begin the succession at Ephesus with this respectable name, yet Timothy was not a stated office-bearer in that church; but a person whom Paul, from intimate acquaintance with his zeal and his talents, sent to Ephesus, where he himself had resided two years, and had ordained elders. This is

rendered the more probable by our being able to explain the circumstances, which made it proper to send such a person as Timothy with an extraordinary character to Ephesus. In the solemn charge which Paul addressed to the elders of that church, when he summoned them to meet him at Miletus, there are these words, Acts xx. 29, 30; "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your ownselves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch." As this warning suggests that there might be much expediency in sending an extraordinary teacher to Ephesus, so we are told by some ancient Christian writers, that Timothy was left at Ephesus in order to oppose Judaizing teachers; and many parts of the Epistles show, that the arts of the false teachers at Ephesus had seduced some, and that the nature of their teaching implied such a display of learning, and such a perversion of Christian doctrine, as required an able and skilful antagonist.

Titus is styled, in the postscript of the epistle addressed to him, Bishop of the church of the Cretians. But the postscripts of the epistles are known to be of no authority, being the additions of a later age; and it appears from two circumstances, that Titus was an evangelist, and not, as the postscript bears, Bishop of the church of the Cretians, or a stated office-bearer in that church. 1. From the account given of his being left there. Titus i. 5. "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city;" which, according to the description that we find in Eusebius, is the very work of an evangelist. 2. From a direction given him, Titus iii. 12. "When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis: for I have determined there to winter." Nicopolis was a town in Macedonia, or in Epirus. Whichever of the two we understand it to be, Titus had to sail from Crete the whole length of the *Mare Aegeum*, in those days a very difficult navigation, before he could reach the apostle. The direction, therefore, seems to imply that the work assigned him in the first chapter was temporary. When it was finished, he was to rejoin the apostle, that he might be sent elsewhere; and, accordingly, in the second epistle

to Timothy, which is generally understood to be one of the last of Paul's epistles, and was certainly written after Titus had left Crete, it is said "Titus is departed unto Dalmatia."

If these are arguments sufficient to prove that Timothy and Titus were extraordinary office-bearers, suited to the infant state of the Christian church, then these two instances, of a delegation of the apostolical form of government, are no proof that such delegation to single persons ought to be continued, or that the apostles intended it should remain in the Christian church. But, if the support which the episcopal form of government derives from the powers committed to Timothy and Titus be withdrawn, the Presbyterians contend, that the Scriptures furnish no unequivocal instance of inspection over pastors being exercised by any office-bearer inferior to an apostle; and they think they are able to prove that the distinction between bishops and presbyters has no foundation in Scripture. Even after they prove this point, they have still to combat the arguments which the Episcopalians derive from the universal establishment of Episcopacy, and from the succession of bishops since the days of the apostles. These, however, are matters of secondary consideration. The first thing incumbent upon those, who contend that Episcopal government does not come to us recommended by apostolical authority, is to show, that presbyters are in the New Testament put upon a level with bishops, and are there invested with those powers of ordination and jurisdiction, which, according to the Episcopal form of government, belong exclusively to the higher order of office-bearers. The amount of the reasoning of the Presbyterians upon this fundamental point may be thus stated.

They begin their argument with distinguishing carefully between those extraordinary powers, which exalt the apostles of Jesus above all other office-bearers in his church, and those ordinary functions implied in their office as teachers, which are in all ages necessary for the edification of the body of Christ. The universal commission, which they received from their Master, to make disciples of all nations, could not be permanent as to the extent of it, because it was their practice to ordain elders in every city, and because the course of human affairs required that, after

Christianity was established, the teachers of it should officiate in a particular place. The infallible guidance of the Spirit, under which the apostles acted in the execution of their universal commission, was not promised, in the same measure, to succeeding teachers. But being, in their case, vouched by the power of working miracles, it directed the Christians of their days to submit implicitly to their injunctions and directions; it placed their words upon a footing with the words of their Master; and it warrants the Christian world, in all ages, to receive with entire confidence that system of faith and morality, which they were authorised to deliver in his name. But, as all Protestants hold that this system was completed when the canon of Scripture was closed, and that neither individuals, nor any body of men, have authority to add any new articles of faith, it is admitted by them that a great part of the apostolical powers ceased with those to whom Jesus first committed them: and, therefore, the Presbyterians cannot appear to contradict the analogy of faith, when they rank amongst the extraordinary powers, which were to cease after the days of the apostles, that supreme right of inspection and government over Christian pastors, which was implied in their universal commission, and in their hands was not liable to abuse. Amongst the ordinary functions belonging to their office as teachers, which were to remain always in the Christian church, are to be ranked, not only preaching the word and dispensing the sacraments, but also that rule and government over Christians as such, which is implied in the idea of the church as a society; and the Presbyterians contend, that the right of exercising all these ordinary functions was conveyed by the apostles to πρεσβυτεροι, whom they ordained. In order to prove that none of these ordinary functions were reserved, as the distinguishing privilege of a higher class of office-bearers, but that the Presbyters derived, from the ordination of the apostles, a right to govern the church as well as to preach and to dispense the sacraments, the Presbyterians are accustomed to dwell upon this incontrovertible proposition, that the two names επισκοποι and πρεσβυτεροι are used by the apostles promiscuously; from whence this inference seems clearly to follow, that a distinction between επισκοποι and πρεσβυτεροι, as if they denoted different classes of office-bearers, is a

distinction unknown in the New Testament. When the apostle Paul sent for the elders of Ephesus to meet him at Miletus, although they are called τους πρεσβυτερους της εκκλησιας, he thus addresses them, Acts xx. 28, προσεχετε ουν εαυτοις, και παντι τω ποιμνιω, εν ω υμας το πνευμα το αγιον εθετο επισκοπους, ποιμαινειν την εκκλησιαν του Θεου. Here the πρεσβυτεροι are called επισκοποι, and are addressed as having the government of the church. Paul says to Titus, "I left thee in Crete ινα καταστησης κατα πολιν πρεσβυτερους." He mentions some qualifications which ought to be required in them; and he adds as a reason for requiring such qualifications, δει γαρ τον επισκοπον ανεγκλητον ειναι; intimating that the two names were convertible. The epistle to the Philippians is addressed πασι τοις αγιοις εν Χριστω Ιησου, τοις ουσιν εν Φιλιπποις, συν επισκοποις και διακονοις: the natural interpretation of which is, that these επισκοποι resided at Philippi in connexion with the Christians of that church; and that as there is no mention of πρεσβυτεροι in the address, the same persons whom the writers of the New Testament, in speaking of other churches, call πρεσβυτεροι, are here termed επισκοποι. Lastly, as πρεσβυτεροι are thus called επισκοποι, so the apostles, the highest office-bearers in the church, did not think it beneath them to take the name πρεσβυτεροι. John begins his second and third epistles with the words ὁ πρεσβυτερος,—and Peter thus writes to the Christians whom he addresses, 1 Pet. v. 1; "The elders which are among you, I exhort, who am also an elder. Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory." Here are powers of government committed to πρεσβυτεροι. The apostle, by calling himself συμπρεσβυτερος, seems to intimate that they possessed all the authority in the Christian church, which was to remain after the death of the apostles; and the introduction of the αρχιποιμην appears inconsistent with the idea of the πρεσβυτεροι being accountable to any individual teacher, after the apostles ceased to represent the authority of the chief Shepherd upon earth.

The Presbyterians say further, that it may be gathered from the New Testament, that πρεσβυτεροι, having received, by ordination from the apostles, the right of governing the church, had also the right of conveying to others, by ordi-

nation, all the powers with which they had been invested. This appears, in the first place, because they are not prohibited from so doing. For since it was the intention of Christ, that there should be a succession of office-bearers having rule in his church, and since the natural method of continuing this succession is through those who have been themselves invested with the character, nothing less than an express inhibition can satisfy us that the πρεσβυτεροι, the first office-bearers whom the apostles ordained, were restrained from ordaining others. But there neither is any such inhibition, nor is it possible there can be; because the names επισκοποι and πρεσβυτεροι, being used in the New Testament promiscuously, even although there were any passages, as there are none, investing επισκοποι with the right of ordination, still we could not be sure that those, who in other places are called πρεσβυτεροι, were not included under this name. But, in the second place, that πρεσβυτεροι were not excluded from the right of ordination, is made manifest by what the apostle says of Timothy. For, as if to show that the office of πρεσβυτεροι was not degraded by the temporary authority, which we understand to have been conveyed to this extraordinary officer, we are told that they had a part in his ordination. The apostle indeed speaks, 2 Tim. i. 6, of χαρισμα του Θεου, ὁ εστιν εν σοι δια της επιθεσεως των χειρων μου. But he speaks, 1 Tim. iv. 14, of the same χαρισμα ὁ εδοθη σοι δια προφητειας, μετα επιθεσεως των χειρων του πρεσβυτεριου. So that the apostle, who had ordained many elders before he met with Timothy, appears to have called for their assistance in the ordination of this person; which may be regarded as an apostolical acknowledgment of what we found to be implied in the nature of their office, that they have a right to ordain.

Although this train of reasoning employed by the Presbyterians, should be understood to prove that the distinction between the order of bishops and the order of presbyters, which is the foundation of the Episcopal form of government, is unknown to the New Testament, yet if it could be shown that this distinction has obtained in the Christian church ever since the days of the apostles, it might appear to derive, from this early and uniform practice, a sanction nearly equivalent to the express appointment of Scripture. For it might be argued, that although

the apostles had not unequivocally declared this distinction in their writings, the fact unquestionably proved that they had established it in the churches which they planted, and that from those who had the best opportunity of knowing their minds, there was diffused an universal impression that they intended it should be continual. In this manner, the Episcopal form of government would seem to stand nearly upon the same ground with the consecration of the Lord's day. There is no commandment in the New Testament appointing the change of the Sabbath, from the seventh day of the week to the first; and the instances of the apostles meeting for public worship, upon the first day, recorded in the New Testament, are not of themselves sufficient to prove that they had laid aside the practice of attending public worship, as our Lord did, on the seventh day; or that they meant the first day to be always kept holy. But when we conjoin with these instances, the primitive, universal, and uninterrupted practice of the Christian world; when we gather from the first Christian writers, from heathens, and from every kind of authentic evidence, that the disciples of Jesus everywhere agreed in the observance of the Lord's day, amidst their differences upon almost every other point, we cannot doubt that the change was made by an authority which all Christians recognised. Episcopal writers are accustomed, in the course of their argument, to refer to this as a parallel case; and affirming that there is the same evidence of an apostolical appointment, in the distinction between bishops and presbyters, as in the change of the Sabbath, they conclude that the alleged ambiguity in those passages of Scripture, where they think this distinction may be found, is completely removed, when we interpret them in the legitimate manner, by the practice of the Christian church ever since those passages were written.

This mode of arguing is very plausible; but when thoroughly canvassed, it affords a more uncertain support to the apostolical institution of Episcopacy than it seems at first sight to give.—You will be sensible of this, by attending to the three following circumstances.

1. There is no authentic catalogue of the names of those who were bishops, for many of the ages immediately following the days of the apostles. The persecution to which

the early Christians were exposed, the smallness of their numbers in many of the places where they assembled, and the secrecy with which they were obliged to hold their meetings, did not admit of records regularly kept, and transmitted in a state of preservation to distant ages. Of the succession in many churches, during the first and second centuries, we know nothing: and even with regard to those, which either from their being mentioned in Scripture, or from the celebrity of the cities where they were planted, make a conspicuous figure in ecclesiastical history, we find the greatest intricacy, and contradiction, and very doubtful conjecture in the attempts to ascertain the succession of their teachers. These attempts could not be conducted with much probability of success, till after Christianity became the established religion of the empire. We meet with an example in the ecclesiastical history of Eusebius. He was bishop of Cesarea, and a man of great influence at the court of Constantine. Yet even with all his solicitude to discover the truth, and all the means of information which he had it in his power to command, he begins his catalogue with declaring, that "it is not easy to say who were the disciples of the apostles that were appointed to feed the churches which they planted, excepting only those whom we may learn from the writings of Paul."* It is manifest, that an argument founded upon the uninterrupted succession from the days of the apostles is very much weakened, when, upon tracing back this succession, we find an unavoidable, and an acknowledged uncertainty, at the very time, when it is of most importance to the argument to know exactly what was done.

2. This deficiency of catalogues cannot be supplied by the manner in which ancient writers speak of what the apostles did. Although the names were lost, there might be so clear a description of the powers of the different offices, as would decide the controversy. But this is far from being the case. The same ambiguity in the meaning of the word bishop, which we remark in Scripture, pervades the testimony which the earliest Christian writers bear to the establishment of Episcopacy. Thus when

* Hist. Eccles. iii. 4.

Clemens, one of the apostolical fathers, who wrote in the first century an epistle to the Corinthians, says in a passage already referred to, "the apostles preached through cities and countries, appointing their first disciples, after having proved them by the Spirit, to be ἐπισκόπους καὶ διακόνους τῶν μελλόντων πιστεύειν, and left them directions that, after their death, other approved men should succeed in their ministry," here is evidence of a succession of teachers, but no evidence that any of those teachers possessed the powers which are conceived to distinguish those, whom we now call bishops, from presbyters.* For Clemens uses a word which in Scripture is applied to all Christian teachers; and by the omission of πρεσβύτεροι in this early enumeration of office-bearers, he seems to consider ἐπίσκοποι and πρεσβύτεροι as equivalent. Other ancient writers, too, in those very passages which have been quoted as their testimony to the uninterrupted succession of bishops, are found, upon a critical attention to their words, to mean nothing more than the succession of apostolical doctrine conveyed through the men whom the apostles appointed to teach it, whether those men are called ἐπίσκοποι or πρεσβύτεροι.

3. Lastly, with regard to this point of apostolical succession, it is to be considered that we have no reason to presume, that in all the places where the apostles preached, they observed one fixed course of settling church government. The book of Acts, after the conversion of the Apostle Paul, is chiefly a history of his journeyings; and by comparing incidental passages of that book, with the information which may be collected from his epistles, we are enabled to form a conception of the plan of government which he established in some churches; or rather different systems with regard to that plan have been built upon his words. But we have no means of following him in a great part of his progress; and of what was done by the other apostles, who, in the execution of their universal commission, visited different quarters of the world, Scripture gives little information, and ancient writers speak very generally and uncertainly. Our knowledge, therefore, extends to only a part of the practice of one

* King on Prim. Church, iv. 3.

apostle. But it is a conclusion which the premises by no means warrant, that what was done by one apostle in planting some churches, was done by every other apostle in planting all churches. The presumption rather is, that the apostles would accommodate establishments to circumstances, to the numbers whom they had converted, or the numbers of future converts whom the largeness of the city or the situation of the country might lead them to expect; and that they would leave many things to be settled as the future occasions of the church might require. This is so agreeable to the course of human affairs, to the shortness of the stay which the apostles could afford to make in most places, and to the general and prudential directions contained in the Epistles of Paul, that, although we had no particular authority for it, a candid inquirer would be inclined to suppose it must have happened. But the fact is that some other writers say nearly the same thing, and Epiphanius, a bishop of the fourth century, gives precisely this account of the matter. The apostles, he states, were not able to settle all things at once. But according to the number of believers, and the qualifications for the different offices which those whom they found appeared to possess, they appointed in some places only a bishop and deacons, in others, presbyters and deacons, in others, bishops, presbyters and deacons; and this, says Epiphanius, accounts for the variety in the addresses used by Paul in his Epistles, as he wrote according to the present state of things, before the church had received all its offices.*

As far as the authority of Epiphanius is of any weight, this statement contradicts the opinion of an universal establishment of Episcopacy by the apostles, and a continued succession of bishops from their days. But it will occur to you, that he seems to represent the Episcopal form of government as the completion of that plan which they began, and which they would have completed themselves, if circumstances had permitted. Here, then, is a strong ground to which the defenders of that form may betake themselves, after all that has been said. For allowing, what they do not allow, that in Scripture there is no evidence of an intention to establish a permanent distinction

* Irenicum, vi.

between bishops and presbyters, and allowing that there is a chasm of many years after the days of the apostles, in which there is no evidence of a succession of persons having those peculiar powers which are ascribed to bishops, yet, it is certain, that the history of the Christian church presents to every observer that form of government which is called Episcopal. There may have been, from various local causes, instances of church government being conducted for many years without bishops; and it may be true, that some nations, as has been affirmed with regard to Scotland in early times, had no Christian teachers bearing that name. But these partial interruptions or irregularities are overlooked by one who attends to the general appearance of Christendom. For, although in Scripture, and in the writings of the apostolical fathers, bishops and presbyters may be confounded, yet, in the second century, the name bishops appears to have been appropriated to an order of men who had a priority in rank above other Christian teachers; and from the second century to the time of the Reformation, it is unquestionable that this order of men continued to exist in almost all parts of the Christian world, was acknowledged to possess the right of exercising peculiar powers, and was looked up to with respect and a degree of submission by both clergy and laity. Now, this general consent of the Christian church seems to afford convincing evidence, that the distinction between bishops and presbyters, if not founded in Scripture or apostolical appointment, was a continuation of that establishment which the apostles began, and probably the consequence of directions which they gave in planting churches. At least, it appears to be incumbent upon those who have departed from this early and general practice, to give some other account, equally rational and probable, of the manner in which it was introduced.

The challenge is undoubtedly a fair one; and the strength of the Episcopal cause lies in the statement which I have now given. Yet, notwithstanding the presumption in favour of the apostolical appointment of Episcopacy, which certainly arises from its having had possession of the Christian church for so many ages, we think we are able to show that the form of government, to which Presbyterians have recurred, is not to be regarded as a novel invention.

From various circumstances formerly mentioned, it appears probable, that though the apostles did not follow one uniform course, yet, in many of the principal cities which they visited, they ordained a number of teachers, whom they called πρεσβυτεροι. In Ephesus, Corinth, Jerusalem, and other places, the number of believers, even during the life of the apostles, was probably too great to assemble in one house, so that in those places there might be a necessity for more than one teacher. But, independently of this circumstance, the apostles, according to an expression that occurred in the passage lately quoted from Clemens, had a regard to the interests των μελλοντων πιστευειν; and when being themselves upon the spot, they could exercise that gift of "discerning spirits," which was one of the extraordinary powers conferred upon them by the Holy Ghost, they chose to provide for the future increase of believers in different districts, by setting apart, "for the work of the ministry," such as they found worthy. This *cœtus presbyterorum* attended to all the spiritual concerns of the Christians in the city where they resided, apportioning among themselves the different offices which might minister to their edification and comfort; and they were ready to embrace every favourable opportunity of communicating to the inhabitants of the adjoining region, those glad tidings which had been unfolded in the city by the apostles themselves. A body of presbyters, acting in concert for these ends, would naturally hold frequent meetings, that individuals might report their success, and that all the members might consult about the most prudent methods of promoting their common object. In these meetings some person would preside for the sake of order; and whether this precedency went by seniority, or by rotation, or was a permanent office conferred by election upon one of the presbyters, it implied, in the person who held it, a precedency, an efficiency, a degree of control over the rest, and a title to respect. To this person two names appear to have been applied in very ancient times, επισκοπος and αγγελος. There was a peculiar propriety in giving him the name επισκοπος, while the other members of the *cœtus* retained the name πρεσβυτεροι, because, as these two names are in Scripture equivalent, this appropriation did not imply that he possessed any powers different in

kind from those of presbyters; it only intimated his being invested by office with a certain inspection. The other name αγγελος was probably borrowed from the service of the Jewish synagogue, where it was applied to the person who presided in the worship, and exhorted the people. It is found in the epistles sent by the apostle John, in the book of the Revelation, to the seven churches of Asia, every one of which is inscribed τῳ αγγελῳ της Εφεσινης εκκλησιας, της εκκλησιας· Σμυρναιων, της εν Περγαμῳ εκκλησιας, &c. We know that at Ephesus, one of the seven churches, there were several elders whom Paul had ordained. But if one of this *cœtus presbyterorum* was president, it was natural for the apostle to inscribe the epistle to him; and as the name τῳ αγγελῳ της εκκλησιας certainly leads us to think of one, and not of many, we consider it as the name of the president. While the joint employment of the pastors, in caring for the spiritual interests of the Christians in the city, thus gave occasion to the existence of a person who stood forth distinguished from the rest, their labours in converting the inhabitants of the adjoining country tended to produce the same effect. If these labours were crowned with any degree of success, the congregations formed by them would feel a connexion with the mother church, from which they had received their pastors. The presbyters settled in the country would probably wish to maintain a fellowship with the *cœtus presbyterorum* to which they had belonged; or the care of all the Christians, both in the city and in the country, would be considered as belonging to the whole *cœtus*, who would assign tasks and departments to individual members, as appeared to them most expedient. In either case, this increase of the number of Christians would multiply the occasions, upon which the person who presided over the *cœtus* would appear in his character of president, and afford him various opportunities of extending his claims, and enlarging his powers; so that with no greater degree of sagacity and attention to the succession of events than is commonly displayed in the conduct of human affairs, the president of the *cœtus presbyterorum* might establish himself in such a pre-eminence over the individual members, as corresponds to the description given in the second and third centuries of the dignity of a bishop.

We cannot doubt that common prudence would dictate that gradual extension of the powers of the bishop, which might create the least possible alarm; and yet we are unable to tell all the steps, by which the president of the college of presbyters rose to the estimation of being an office-bearer exalted above presbyters by special powers; nor can we assign the dates of the several extensions of his privileges. But, if the most zealous friends of episcopacy are obliged to plead the deficiency of all the ecclesiastical records of early times, as an apology for their not producing authentic catalogues of that succession of bishops which they pretend to have existed, we are equally entitled to plead the same deficiency, in excuse of the want of particularity in our delineation of that progress, by which we account for the introduction of episcopacy. We hold that the progress is abundantly probable, by being agreeable to the course of human affairs in other things; and we find this general probability very much confirmed by two particular circumstances belonging to this subject. One is, that, after the days of the apostles, there did arise, by human institution, an imparity among the bishops. For although every bishop claims, in respect of his office, to be a successor of the apostles, and although ancient writers agree that a bishop of the poorest city has the same priesthood as a bishop of the richest, and that, in the care of his own diocese, he has full power to determine for himself, and is subject to none but Christ, yet there was introduced, in the first four centuries, the gradation of patriarchs, metropolitans, archbishops, and bishops. There were the patriarchs of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, and Antioch, whose jurisdiction extended over all the Christian church; under these were the metropolitans, who presided in the several provinces; and under them the archbishops, each of whom had the inspection of several bishops in a district. This gradation was probably introduced by those general councils, which, in the second century, began to be held by Christians, and in which it was considered as a piece of respect due to the principal cities of the empire, that the bishops of those cities should preside. Various circumstances led the Christians, even before their religion had the benefit of a public establishment; to accommodate the government of the church to the govern-

ment of the state; and when the empire became Christian, Constantine judged it a matter of policy to complete this accommodation. In conformity to the exarchates, provinces, and districts, into which he divided the empire, he established a hierarchy composed of different orders of bishops, who were distinguished from one another, not only in respect of rank, but also in respect of privileges and power; and so agreeable was this establishment to the practice which the Christians themselves had begun, and to their sentiments, that the council of Nice, which met so early as A.D. 325, recognised the prerogatives claimed by the bishops of Rome, Antioch, and Alexandria, as τα αρχαια εθη, and declared that it would disown every bishop, who is ordained χωρις γνωμης του μητροπολιτου. Now, if this limitation of the powers of bishops, and this subjection of many of them to those with whom they were originally equal, had become so general during the first three centuries, as to obtain, in 325, the highest ecclesiastical sanction, we have no reason to be surprised, if, in the same time, a bishop should be exalted, from being the first among equals, chosen by their suffrage, to be accounted an office-bearer of a higher order than presbyters. The Episcopal writers say that the cases are by no means similar, because all bishops are by their office equal, whereas bishops and presbyters are so essentially distinct, that it never was accounted lawful for presbyters to intermeddle in those actions which are appropriated to a bishop. But, in answer to this, we bring forward a second circumstance, that many expressions in ancient writers correspond to this account of the origin of Episcopacy, and that there are some passages in which the same account is given. There are, it is true, books that assume a very early date, which speak clearly and strongly of the superiority of bishops above presbyters;—such as the apostolical constitutions, and the larger epistles of Ignatius. But it is now generally understood by learned men, that these books are full of interpolations, the works of a much later age, inserted for the very purpose of magnifying the episcopal office. Those writers of the second and third centuries, whose works are admitted to be genuine, abound with expressions which represent the presbyters as partners with the bishops, in the honours and duties of the episcopal office. They call the

presbyters, as well as the bishops, the successors of the apostles; and Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, who is esteemed one of the most zealous defenders of Episcopacy, declares, that it was his invariable rule to do nothing without the advice and concurrence of his co-presbyters.* Jerome, who lived about the end of the fourth century, gives in different parts of his works, precisely the same account of the origin of Episcopacy as we do. In one place, where he quotes all the passages of the New Testament, in which the names bishops and presbyters appear to be synonymous, he says that, before there were parties in religion, churches were governed *communi consilio presbyterorum.* But that afterwards, in order to pull up the roots of division, *toto orbe decretum est,* i. e. it became an universal practice founded upon experience of its expediency, that one of the presbyters should be chosen by the rest to be the head, and that the care of governing the church should be committed to him. Let presbyters, therefore, he says, know that they are subject, by the custom of the church, to him who presides over them; and let bishops know that they are greater than presbyters, rather by custom than by the appointment of the Lord, and that still the church ought to be governed in common.

So pointed a testimony against the apostolical institution of Episcopacy, proceeding from a writer so respectable and so ancient as Jerome, whom Erasmus calls without controversy the most learned of Christians, forms an authority which the Presbyterians gladly lay hold of, and which their antagonists show an extreme solicitude to invalidate. It is said that Jerome was too late to know the truth; that, being himself only a presbyter, he was willing to propagate a system which might bring bishops nearer to a level with himself, and that in this system he is singular. We, on the other hand, are not disposed to entertain any suspicion with regard to the motives of his testimony, because he appears to us only to assert, at a time when he had more opportunities of information than we have, the same thing which we gather from the words of Scripture, from the general appearance of the primitive church, and from various particular expressions of Christian writers.

* King on the Prim. Church, iv. 4; v. 6.

We do not account his testimony singular, although no person has said precisely the same thing. But when we find Augustine, who was a bishop, writing to Jerome, *Secundum honorum vocabula quæ jam ecclesiæ usus obtinuit, episcopatus presbyterio major est;** when we find Isidore, bishop of Seville, 200 years after, where he has stated the different offices in which presbyters are partners with bishops, adding these words, *Sola propter auctoritatem summo sacerdoti clericorum ordinatio reservata est, ne a multis ecclesiæ disciplina vindicata concordiam solveret:*—and when we find the second council of Seville, about the same time, using these words, *Quamvis cum episcopis plurium presbyteris ministeriorum communis sit dispensatio, quædam novellis et ecclesiasticis regulis sibi prohibita noverint:*†. we cannot entertain a doubt, that an opinion somewhat similar to ours, concerning the introduction of Episcopacy as a matter of order, and the gradual extension of the claims and privileges of bishops, was very far from being peculiar to Jerome. It is true that this opinion, although corresponding with various incidental expressions in numberless writers, was not, before the Reformation, generally brought forward in clear words. But this we think may be accounted for, by an apprehension that the dignity and authority of the episcopal order, which was esteemed essential to the honour and peace of the church, would be weakened by recalling to the minds of the people the manner in which it arose. The reformers, by whom the Presbyterian church was settled, were restrained by no such delicacy. Considering the distinction between bishops and presbyters as having no foundation in Scripture, and wishing to apply an effectual remedy to the abuses which had been introduced in the progress of human ambition, by the practice of investing bishops with powers superior to presbyters, they did not consider the antiquity or universality of the practice as any reason for its being continued; and they resolved to provide for the order of the Christian society, by recurring to what appeared to them the primitive Scripture model. The fundamental principle, therefore, of the government which they established is this, that all ministers of the Gospel

* Aug. Ep. xxix. † Irenicum, chap. vi.

are equal in rank and in power. While certain parts of the apostolical office expired with the persons to whom it was committed by the Lord Jesus, the right of performing all the ministerial functions, which were intended to be perpetual in the Christian church, is conceived to be conveyed by the act of ordination, so that every person who is ordained is as much a successor of the apostles as any teacher of religion can be. This essential equality of all the ministers of the Gospel is inconsistent with the idea of prelacy, or any superiority of office in the Christian church above that of presbyters; and it admits of no other official preference, but that which is constituted by voluntary agreement for the sake of order. Thus, if a number of those, who are called in the New Testament indiscriminately πρεσβυτεροι or επισκοποι, have the charge of a large city or a territory, it is necessary for the conduct of their deliberations, and the execution of their sentences, that some one should preside in their meetings; and in the mode of nominating the president, there may be considerable variety. The members may succeed to the office by seniority, or one may be elected for life, or a new president may be chosen at stated times. In some of those churches upon the Continent, which acknowledge a parity of orders, there are superintendents, *præpositi*, or *inspectores*, who are appointed for life to preside in the council of presbyters, and are invested with a kind of inspection over the individual pastors. But, having no other superiority than that which is necessarily implied in the office of president, and no claim to any powers or privileges from which presbyters are necessarily excluded, they are only accounted *primi inter pares*. The greater part of Presbyterian churches, from a jealousy lest prelacy be introduced under the form of superintendency, prefer the frequent election of a new president or moderator, who, being the executive officer of the society in which he presides, acts in their name, and appears at their head, but who, when his term is expired, returns to a perfect equality with his brethren.*

* This is the fundamental principle of the Presbyterian government, and a general account of the method of preserving order, which is there substituted in place of Episcopacy. A more particular deli-

heation of the system erected upon this foundation, together with some remarks suggested by the review which has been taken of the Episcopal and Presbyterian forms of church government, will be found in Section II. of a View of the Constitution of the Church of Scotland, published by the author in 1817. The question respecting the office of lay elders is there briefly discussed, the heads of argument only being given. The argument might have been somewhat extended here from the author's manuscripts, but it did not seem material to swell the present work, by enlarging on the subject.—Ed.

CHAP. III.

NATURE AND EXTENT OF POWER IMPLIED IN CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

I COME now to the second great division, into which all the questions that have arisen upon the subject of church government may be resolved, viz. the opinions that have been maintained respecting the nature and the degree of power implied in that government.

There were times when these opinions held an importance in the public estimation, and were defended with a zeal and animosity, of which it is difficult for us in our day to form a conception. I am very far from wishing to revive any portion of that bitterness; nor do I think it necessary for you to be intimately acquainted with all the tenets and arguments which have been broached in this voluminous controversy. I shall be able sufficiently to accomplish the purpose of this part of my course, by reducing all that may be said concerning the powers implied in church government, under five general positions. In illustrating these positions, I shall introduce the chief opinions that have been held upon this subject; and by this manner of introducing them, I shall state, in the order which it will be easiest for you to follow and to retain, because it is the most natural order, both the principles from which the several opinions flow, and the sources from which the antagonists of each of them derived what they accounted a sufficient confutation.

1. The first general position is this, that the power implied in the exercise of church government is not a power created by the state, or flowing entirely from those regulations, which the supreme rulers of the state may choose to make with regard to the Christian society.

It is necessary to begin with opposing this fundamental position to an opinion, which, from its author, is known by the name of Erastianism. In the course of the sixteenth century there flourished Erastus, a native of Switzerland, an acute philosopher, and a learned physician. In opposition to the judicial astrology which was then esteemed and practised, he recommended and improved the study of chemistry. Amongst other branches of the learning of the times which engaged his researches, he did not neglect theology. He embraced the reformed religion from conviction: but in consequence of the exorbitant claims advanced both by the Pope and by the rulers of some of the reformed churches, he conceived it was his duty as a good protestant, in the beginning of the Reformation, to resolve all the powers exercised by church governors into the will of the state. It was his opinion, that the office-bearers in the Christian church, as such, are merely instructors, who fulfil their office by admonishing and endeavouring to persuade Christians, but who have no power, unless it is given them by the state, to inflict penalties of any kind. Every thing, therefore, which we are accustomed to call ecclesiastical censure, was considered by him as a civil punishment, which the state might employ the ministers of religion to inflict, but which, as to the occasion, the manner, and the effect of its being inflicted, was as completely under the direction of the civil power, as any branch of the criminal code.

We shall afterwards find, that the inconveniencies, which this opinion was meant to remedy, may be obviated in other ways. As to the opinion itself, it discovers those partial views which the consideration of inconveniencies often occasions; and it seems impossible for any person, whose mind comprehends the whole subject, not to perceive that the opinion is false. Even were the Christian society merely a voluntary association, into which men entered without being obliged to it, still this society would possess the right which is inherent in the nature of all so-

cieties, of defending itself against intrusion and insult, and of preserving the character which it chose to assume, by refusing to admit those whom it judged unworthy of being members, or by requiring them to depart. But the Christian church is to be regarded in a much higher light than as a voluntary association. It is a society created by divine institution, founded in the duty which Jesus requires of his disciples to "confess him before men," and to unite for the purpose of performing certain rites. The members of this society, as his disciples, profess to believe certain doctrines, and declare that they are bound to maintain a certain character. This profession and this declaration, being the very terms which bind the society together, are implied in the solemnities by which every member is admitted, or expresses his resolution to continue in the society. The administration of these solemnities, therefore, while it prevents those who do not comply with the terms from being admitted, indicates a warrant from the founder of the society, to deprive of all its privileges those, who, after having been admitted, depart from the terms upon which their admission proceeded. It is reasonable to think that the same persons, who are appointed to administer the solemn rites by which the society is distinguished from all others, will be intrusted with the power of judging who are to be admitted, and who may deserve to be excluded from the society; and it is obvious to every one who reads the New Testament, that the names there given to those persons are expressive of the degree of inspection and authority, which this act of judgment implies. They are called ἡγουμενοι, επισκοποι, προεστωτες. They are commanded not only διδασκειν, νουθετειν, παρακαλειν, but also ελεγχειν, επιτιμαειν. Our Saviour, in the days of his ministry, before he had fully constituted his church, spoke of a case in which it was the duty of Christians to consider a person, who had been a brother, as having, by his own fault, forfeited that character, so as to deserve to be looked upon as a heathen and a publican. Matth. xviii. 17. After the church was constituted, the apostle speaks of κυβερνησεις, as well as διδασκαλους, being set in it by God. 1 Cor. xii. 28. He claims an εξουσια as belonging to him. 2 Cor. x. He exercises that εξουσια, by commanding the Corinthians εξαιρειν a wicked person who had been a mem-

ber of that church; he exhorts Christians μη συναναμιγνυσθαι εαν τις αδελφος ονομαζομενος λοιδορος, η μεθυσος, η αρπαξ, &c.; he represents it as their duty κρινειν ου τους εξω, αλλα τους εσω; and he assigns as a reason for their exercising this judicial power over those who were members of the church, that the wicked person, by being thus separated, might be amended, or brought to a better mind, and that the infection of his wickedness might be prevented from spreading. 1 Cor. v. Now these are general reasons arising from the nature and purposes of the Christian society, and totally independent of any authority which the church may derive from the state; and the church acted upon these reasons, both in the days of the apostles, and in the subsequent ages, when it derived no countenance or support from the state, but suffered persecution. Even then it exercised the power resulting from its character, delegated to it by its author, and implied in the designations given to its office-bearers, by rebuking and censuring the faults of its members, and by expelling those whom it judged unworthy of its privileges.

These reasonings and facts seem to establish, with incontrovertible evidence, that some kind of authority over the members belongs essentially to the governors of the Christian society; that, as the church did exist before it was united with the state, it may exist without any such union; and that it will possess, in this state of separation, when it can derive no aid from civil regulations, all the authority which Christ meant to convey through his apostles to their successors, and of the exercise of which the apostles have left examples. The same reasoning and facts also prove, that when the church receives the protection and countenance of the civil power, she does not, by this alliance, lose those rights and powers which are implied in church government, as such. But as the church may encroach upon the state, by advancing claims which are not warranted by the purposes of her institution, or the will of her founder; so, on the other hand, the state may violate the immunities of the church, may trench upon that jurisdiction which is essential to her character, and may forcibly subject the members of the Christian society to civil regulations with regard to those parts of their conduct, which, from their nature, fall under the

authority of the office-bearers of the church. It requires a sound judgment, a mind which can easily disembarrass itself from the false views suggested by prejudice, passion, and interest, to make, upon all occasions, the necessary discrimination between the rights of the church, and the rights of the state; and as the line of distinction is not always obvious to an ordinary observer, those who keep on one side of the line are very apt to bring the charge of Erastianism against those who keep on the other. In modern times this charge is not understood to imply that those, against whom it is brought, deny the church any power except what she derives from the state; for few follow the principles of Erastianism so far. The charge is meant to impute to the members of an established church too great a deference to the civil authority from which they derive protection, and an unbecoming tameness in submitting to invasions of those rights, which the church ought to hold sacred. It is a charge very commonly brought by the dissenters of this country against the church of Scotland; and in both the established churches of this island, there are members, whose zeal, in defence of what they account the rights of the church, leads them to accuse of lukewarmness and Erastianism those who do not entertain the same opinion concerning the nature of the rights, or concerning the most prudent and effectual manner of preserving them inviolate. It is often a matter of intricate discussion, how far the accusation is just. Many of the cases, to which it has been applied, will occur in the progress of illustrating other general positions respecting church government; and I will not anticipate the mention of them. It is enough that I have given notice of the modern meaning of Erastianism; and from that meaning it will be perceived that my first general position may be considered as incontrovertible; for almost all who are now accused of Erastianism admit that the church has powers independent of the state. They differ from others as to the measure and extent of those powers, or the prudence of exercising them: they may perhaps regard the advantages which the church derives from an union with the state as more than a compensation for any restrictions which are imposed upon her; but they consider the acquiescence in these restrictions as

a voluntary surrender, a compact in which the church has gained, by giving up what she had a right to retain. And thus the modern system of Erastianism proceeds upon this principle, that the power of the church is essential and intrinsic: it admits of modifications of this intrinsic power which to some appear exceptionable; but it acknowledges, that if the church, instead of deriving any benefit from the state, were opposed and persecuted by the civil magistrate, it would be not only proper, but necessary, to put forth of herself those powers, which, in more favourable circumstances, she chooses to exercise only in conjunction with the state.

2. My second general position is, that the power inherent in the nature of the Christian society, which it derives from divine institution, and not from civil regulation, is merely a spiritual power; in other words, it is concerned only with the consciences of men, and gives no claim to any authority over their persons or their properties.

It includes a right to administer instruction, admonition, reproof, censure—all that may establish those, who submit to it, in the practice of their duty, may improve their character, or make them ashamed of their faults. *It* includes also, we have seen, what is commonly called the power of excommunication, *i. e.* a right, by a judicial sentence, to deprive of the privileges and benefits of continuing members of the Christian society those who are found unworthy. But this is the utmost length to which it can go. Whenever a person is excommunicated, or when he says that he no longer submits to the authority of church government, that authority ceases with regard to him: he is to the church "as a heathen man and a publican;" and excommunication, being the severest infliction within the compass of the power implied in church government, completely exhausts that power, so as to leave nothing more which it can warrantably do.

That the power of which we are speaking is merely a spiritual power, may easily be deduced from the purposes for which the Christian society was instituted; and this deduction is confirmed by explicit declarations of the divine founder.

Human government is ordained of God, for the purpose of securing the subjects in the possession and enjoyment

of their rights. The administration of it, therefore, implies the exercise of a coercive power, which may restrain those who are disposed to invade the rights of others, or which, if the execution of their purpose is not prevented, may inflict such a punishment upon the transgression, as shall deter from a repetition of the like outrage. But the kingdom of Christ, being founded in opposition, not to human violence, but to the influence of an evil spirit, was established for the purpose of delivering men from this spiritual thraldom, by imparting to them the knowledge of that truth which Christ reveals, by cherishing those graces which his Spirit forms, and by leading them, in the obedience of his precepts, and the imitation of his example, to that future happiness of which his mediation encourages them to entertain the hope. This kingdom was not intended to secure men in the enjoyment of their rights. For although the principles which it inspires render its dutiful subjects incapable of doing injury to others, and although the establishment and propagation of it have produced a salutary effect upon the manners of mankind in general, still it supposes that the evil passions of men will continue to operate; it gives notice that wrong will be done; it teaches how wrong ought to be borne; and it represents reproach, and injury, and persecution, as forming part of that discipline, by which its subjects are prepared for a higher state of being, where their sufferings are to cease, and their patience is to be rewarded. The administration of this kingdom, therefore, does not imply the exercise of force. Although all power in heaven and in earth is committed to the Lord of this kingdom, yet, in that branch of the administration of his kingdom, which he has reserved in his own hands, he does not employ his power to place a guard round his faithful subjects. To that protection, which they derive from the general course of Providence, and from the means of defence furnished by human government, he makes no other addition, than the influence which his doctrine has upon the minds of their neighbours, and the esteem and good-will of which their own character, formed by his doctrine, renders them the object. In like manner, in that branch of the administration of the kingdom of Christ, which we call church government, he does not suppose that his office-bearers

are invested with civil power. The end of their appointment is, to bring to a better mind such of their brethren as have erred and transgressed; and in this end they often succeed by the spiritual power which is given them. But they are not allowed to employ a method of cure inconsistent with the spirit of the Christian religion; and those who are obstinate and incorrigible they are commanded to leave where they found them.

There were three occasions in our Lord's life, upon which, agreeably to the deduction that has now been made, he declared explicitly that the administration of his kingdom upon earth implied a spiritual, not a civil power. The first was his answer to an application made to him by one of his hearers, "Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me." Luke xii. 13. Instead of using his influence with either of the parties, or giving any decision upon the matter in dispute, he said, "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" And he proceeded to guard his hearers against covetousness; intimating, in the most significant manner, that his religion tends to form that elevation of desire,—that degree of detachment from the paltry and unsatisfying goods of this world, which will preserve his disciples from injuring one another, but that, if this tendency fails in any instance, the party who considers himself aggrieved, must resort to the laws of his country, and seek redress in the ordinary course of justice.

The second occasion was a request from two of his disciples, who, employing the fondness of a mother as a cover for their own ambition, asked of Jesus that, in his kingdom, which they then expected to be a kingdom of pomp and triumph, they "might sit the one on his right hand, and the other on his left." After exposing their ignorance and folly, he turned to the ten, who were moved with indignation at these two for asking an honour to which each thought himself equally entitled, and he said, Matt. xx. 25, 26, "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister." In human governments, great men κατακυριευουσι και κατεξουσιαζουσι; words which do not imply the abuse of power by tyrannical rule, but merely the possession and

the exercise of power, that degree of influence and authority which renders their offices an object of ambition. "It shall not," says Jesus to his disciples, "be so among you." Although there are persons distinguished by the station which they hold in my kingdom, their office is a ministry, not a dominion. They are subservient to the improvement of their brethren. They have the authority, and they are entitled to the respect which their subserviency requires. But they have none of the power and authority which is implied in the office of earthly rulers; and their station is not an object of ambition.

The third occasion was furnished by the examination of our Lord before Pilate. The astonishment expressed by the Roman magistrate, at the mean appearance of a man who claimed to be king of the Jews, drew from our Lord this declaration, John xviii. 36, 37, "My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." These words require no commentary. Our Lord disclaims the use of force; represents the influence of truth over the mind as the great instrument of his dominion; and characterises the power exercised in his kingdom as a spiritual, not a civil power.

The conduct of our Lord was agreeable to these declarations. He paid tribute; he inculcated submission to the established government, saying, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's;" and although his miracles appeared at different times to have given him entire command of the multitude, he studiously avoided that ostentation of popularity, which might have disturbed the public peace. His apostles, in like manner, with the utmost solicitude, warned the first Christians against considering their faith as furnishing any pretext for resisting the authority of civil government. "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake."* "Let every soul

* 1 Pet. ii. 13.

be subject to the higher powers."* The weapons of the Christian warfare are said to be "not carnal;"† and persecution for conscience sake, however sinful in those from whose authority it proceeds, is not allowed by the apostles to justify resistance.‡ The first establishment of the Christian church required the frequent exercise of that apostolical authority, which, upon all proper occasions, is asserted with becoming dignity. But this authority is distinguished, both in the words and in the practice of the apostles, from every thing which can be called a "lordship over God's heritage." In all the ordinances which they issued, they kept sacredly within the province which belongs to a spiritual power; and in the directions given to Timothy and Titus, the most critical eye cannot discern the smallest deviation from that pure standard of church government which the head of the church exhibited in these words, "my kingdom is not of this world."

Thus clear and superabundant is the proof, that the power implied in church government is purely a spiritual, not in any degree a civil power. The uses which may be made of the position are not less important than the proof of it is clear.

It exposes, in the first place, the fallacy of the great argument upon which the Erastian system rests. There cannot, it is said, be any power in the state which is not created by the state; otherwise there would be, *imperium in imperio*, two separate authorities and jurisdictions, which might require inconsistent services, and assert opposite claims, so as to place the subjects in a situation in which it was impossible for them to obey both. This argument would be unanswerable if the powers were of the same order, if both disposed of the persons and properties of the subjects, and both employed force to insure obedience to their commands. But if the one is a civil and the other a spiritual power, they may unite with the most perfect harmony; and instead of any inconvenience, the greatest advantages may result to both from their union.

The advantages, which the church imparts to the state, arise from the nature and the purpose of that power which

* Rom. xiii. 1. † 2 Cor. x. 4.
‡ 1 Pet. ii. 19, 20; iii. 14. Rom. xiii. 5.

exists in every Christian society. ' This power, addressing itself to the understanding, to the conscience, and the heart, may correct excesses of the passions which human regulations cannot reach, and, by furnishing refined and permanent principles of good conduct, may minister most effectually to the order and happiness of the community. This is the genuine influence of the doctrine of Christ. The power which is founded upon his doctrine ministers its part of this influence, so long as it retains the character of being purely spiritual. It is perverted when it is rendered the instrument of disturbing the public tranquillity; and it goes beyond the purpose of its institution, when its particular requisitions trench upon that right over the persons or properties of the subjects, which belongs exclusively to the sovereign authority in the state.

Such abuses have, indeed, frequently taken place in the Christian church. But they have always arisen from confounding a spiritual and a civil power; and the position which we have now illustrated, if well understood and followed out through its consequences, will always be sufficient to correct them. The correction of such abuses is the second purpose to which this position may be turned. This I shall illustrate by applying the position to the extravagant assertions of some of the sects which appeared after the Reformation; and also to the exemptions and powers claimed by the church of Rome.

At the time of the Reformation, when the minds of men, newly emancipated from spiritual tyranny, were in a state of effervescence and commotion, such as they had not before experienced, there arose various sects, who, although they differed in some points, received, from their repetition of baptism, the common name of Anabaptists, and who agreed also in considering the church of Christ as a society of saints, to which none could belong who were not free from sin. In consequence of this principle, they considered the office of magistracy, which is appointed for the punishment of evil-doers, as useless amongst Christians. From talking of it as useless, they came to revile it as sinful; and men of violent spirits, irritated by opposition, proceeded from words to actions; collected a great army in the year 1525, and, to use the words of Mosheim, " declared war against all laws, governments, and magistrates,

of every kind, under the chimerical pretext, that Christ was now to take the reins of civil and ecclesiastical government into his own hands, and to rule alone over the nations."* That army was dispersed by the princes of Germany; but the principle upon which the army had acted was far from being eradicated. It often broke forth in occasional tumults; it was fostered under a slight disguise in the creeds of those sects, which derived their names from the ancient Anabaptists; it lifted its head in this country during the turbulence of the 17th century; and there is reason to believe that it still lurks in some of those sects which exist upon the Continent. It is a principle which requires to be corrected by punishment, not by reasoning; and every approach to it, in the creed of any Christian society, ought to be narrowly watched as formidable to the state. It is unnecessary for me to prove that this horrid tenet is contrary to Scripture. I shall only refer to our Confession of Faith, chap. xx. xxiii. where passages are adduced in support of the positions there laid down, "that it is lawful for Christians to accept and execute the office of a magistrate; and that they who, upon pretence of Christian liberty, shall oppose any lawful power, or the lawful exercise of it, whether it be civil or ecclesiastical, resist the ordinance of God, and may lawfully be called to account, and proceeded against by the censures of the church, and by the power of the civil magistrate."

The second position may also be applied to the exemptions and powers claimed by the church of Rome.

It was one great object of the policy of the church of Rome to render the clergy of every country a distinct body in the state; and thus, having no close connexion with any community, and acknowledging no other sovereign authority, they might, throughout all Christendom, be kept entirely dependent upon the Popes. For this purpose it was asserted that, in virtue of the sacredness of the sacerdotal character, the clergy were exempted from the ordinary jurisdiction of the countries where they resided, not only in spiritual, but also in civil matters; that they were not bound to pay tribute; and that when they

* Mosheim's Eccles. Cent. xvi. Art. ANABAPTISTS.

committed any crime, they were amenable only to their ecclesiastical superiors, and could not be punished by the civil magistrate. These claims withdrew from obedience to the laws a numerous order of men, who, in addition to their large property, had more learning than any other order; and by instituting a gradation of ecclesiastical courts, from which there lay an appeal in the last resort to the court of Rome, rendered them subject to a foreign power. Claims so dangerous to the peace and order of society were advanced by slow degrees; were artfully accommodated to times and circumstances; were always resisted by wise and able princes; and, in Britain, were abridged by various statutes enacted in the times of Popery, and were finally abolished at the Reformation. In England it was declared by Parliament, and by the clergy, that to "the king's majesty the chief government of all estates of the realm, whether they be ecclesiastical or civil, in all causes, doth appertain, and is not, nor ought to be, subject to any foreign jurisdiction."* In Scotland, too, all papal jurisdiction was at the same period abolished; and our Confession of Faith declares, that "ecclesiastical persons are not exempted from the duty of the people to pray for magistrates, to honour their persons, to pay them tribute and other dues, to obey their lawful commands, and to be subject to their authority for conscience sake."† Both in England and in Scotland, indeed, clergymen are exempted from certain personal services, which are conceived to be inconsistent with their sacred function. They are not summoned as jurymen, and they are not obliged to serve in war. But these exemptions are the result of positive statute, or of that immemorial custom, which receives the name of common law; and they form part of that provision, which the state judges it proper to make, for the regular discharge of the duties incumbent upon the ministers of religion. Such exemptions, being accepted as a civil privilege, and being limited by the terms of the grant, are a recognition on the part of the church, that it has no claim of right to any exemption, but that, agreeably to the declarations of Scripture, and the conduct of our Lord and his apostles, "every soul is subject to the higher powers;"

* Art. xxxvii.

† Confession of Faith, xxiii. 4.

in other words, that the authority of the state extends over ecclesiastical, as well as other persons.

The church of Rome claimed not only exemptions, but also powers. The sentences of the ecclesiastical courts often affected the most valuable civil rights of Christians. The ministers of religion arrogated a precedency of all civil magistrates, and a right to control the exercise of all civil jurisdiction. The popes granted the investiture of ecclesiastical benefices in a kingdom, without the consent, often in opposition to the declared pleasure of the sovereign. They presumed to absolve subjects from all obligation to obey their civil rulers, when the conduct of the rulers gave offence to the church. They often deposed princes for heresy or contumacy; and some popes proceeded to such extravagance, as to affirm that Jesus Christ had given them power to dispose of all the kingdoms of the earth. These claims, opposite as they are to the genius of Christianity, and hostile to the peace of society, were for many ages strenuously asserted, and often submitted to. Had the church been able to support them as uniformly, and to extend them as far as she wished, they would have produced, throughout Christendom, a vile, oppressive, and rapacious despotism. The resistance, which was naturally and nobly made to them, produced some of the most calamitous contests which history records; and the memory of this usurpation should warn, not only rulers in Protestant countries, to restrain every attempt which any sect may make to engraft civil upon ecclesiastical power; but also the office-bearers in the church of Christ, to follow the directions and the example of their Master, by keeping scrupulously within their own province.

In order to prevent misapprehension upon this subject, it is necessary to observe, that, in the progress of the connexion between the church and the state, it generally happens that some matters of a civil nature are committed to the judgment and decision of ecclesiastical courts. This delegated jurisdiction is no usurpation on the part of the church, because, like the legal immunities of the clergy, it is the effect of statute; and in the manner of exercising the civil powers thus delegated to the church, there is generally an acknowledgment that they flow from the state.

In Scotland, the sentence of the church, admitting and receiving a person minister of a parish, gives him a legal right, which he would not otherwise have, to draw the stipend, and other emoluments, which belong to the minister; and the sentence of the church courts, deposing him from the sacred office of the ministry, deprives him, *ipso facto*, of all right to the stipend and emoluments which he had formerly drawn. These civil effects of the sentences of our church courts are an essential branch of the establishment of Presbytery in Scotland; and there is one kind of business connected with that establishment, in which presbyteries are constituted by law civil courts. The expense of the manses and glebes, which the law allows to the ministers of the church of Scotland, is defrayed by the landholders of the parishes. They are assessed for this purpose by a judgment of the presbytery, to whom application must be made in the first instance, and who proceed, like civil courts, in the examination of the necessary witnesses. But as this is merely a regulation of convenience, in a matter concerning which it would be very improper that the decision of a church court should be final, the powers of the presbytery, in assigning manses and glebes, are limited; and there lies an appeal, in any stage of their proceedings, to those courts which usually determine questions that respect the property of the subjects.

In England, besides those branches of jurisdiction that belong to the institution and deprivation of the ministers of the church, the law has submitted various other matters to the jurisdiction of the bishops. In ancient times, all matters, as well spiritual as temporal, were determined in the county court, where the bishop and earl sat together. But William the Conqueror separated the ecclesiastical from the temporal courts; and, since his days, all the causes called ecclesiastical or spiritual have been tried, not in the civil courts of the realm, but in courts held by authority of the bishops, and according to the forms of proceeding peculiar to those courts. The spiritual causes which most nearly affect civil rights, are questions respecting testaments or wills, and questions respecting marriage and divorce. Both these are in England subjected to the jurisdiction of the bishop; the first, be-

cause testaments are often made *in extremis*, when the clergy may be supposed to be present; the second, because marriage, which is considered by the Roman Catholics as a sacrament, is generally solemnized in churches. In order to discuss the multiplicity of intricate business, which may be expected to arise upon these questions in such a country as England, the bishops appoint, for hearing and judging in causes that occur in their dioceses, officers under different names, generally laymen, skilled in the law, who, in the name of the bishop, but without his being present, and generally without his knowledge, decide according to established rules. With the name of one description of these officers we are acquainted in this country. For when the episcopal jurisdiction, which had been exercised under the authority of the Pope, was abolished in Scotland at the Reformation, that the course of justice might not be stopped, a commissary was named for every diocese; and a commissariot court, with jurisdiction over all Scotland, was established at Edinburgh. The commissaries of Scotland, at least the commissariot court in Edinburgh, still retain the power of judging in questions of marriage and divorce, and confirmation of testaments, and thus afford us a specimen of those spiritual courts in England, where one considerable branch of the business of the nation is transacted.*

Whether the constitution of these spiritual courts be proper or not, is a question, concerning which, those who live under a different religious establishment ought to be very scrupulous in declaring any opinion. But this much is manifest, that all the jurisdiction which they exercise in civil matters is conferred by the law of the land; and they are perpetually reminded and made to feel, in the exercise of this jurisdiction, that they are under the control of the law. The canon and civil laws, by which the

* By the statute 4 Geo. IV. ch. 97, the provincial commissaries were superseded, and the duty of each was devolved on the sheriff of the county; and by the statute 1 Will. IV. ch. 69, the commissary court of Edinburgh was declared to have the same jurisdiction in confirmations within the sheriffdom of Edinburgh, with sheriffs being commissaries in other counties; and to have the duty of granting confirmations of testaments of persons dying furth of Scotland, leaving personal property in Scotland. ED.

spiritual courts judge, have their force in England, not from any original obligations to obey the rescripts of Emperors, or the decrees of Popes, but purely because they have been received and allowed of by statute law, or by custom; and while the spiritual courts are permitted to judge by those laws, the courts of common law have a superintendence over them, explaining the laws which concern the extent of their jurisdiction, keeping them within the limits of that jurisdiction, and, if they exceed those limits, issuing prohibitions to restrain them, or summoning them to answer for their conduct in the civil courts.

Although then the courts in England, which are called spiritual, exercise jurisdiction in many questions totally distinct from those which properly fall under the cognizance of a power purely spiritual, this is not to be regarded either as an usurpation on the part of the church, or as an acknowledgment on the part of the state, that the church has any inherent civil power, but merely as a part of the English constitution; a branch of the civil and religious establishment of that country, by which questions of a certain kind are appointed by the state to be tried and judged in a certain manner.

The last use which I shall make of the second position is to apply it to the effects of excommunication. We have seen that church government implies a right to exclude from the privileges of the Christian society those who are deemed unworthy; and that this is the utmost length to which that power can go. We find, indeed, the apostle Paul explaining that expression of our Lord, "let him who will not hear the church be to thee as an heathen man and a publican," by exhorting the Christians to withdraw themselves from any that walked disorderly, not to mingle freely with a brother who had been guilty of any scandalous sin; not to keep company with him, that he may be ashamed.* The primitive Christians, too, a body of men who were discouraged and persecuted by the state, felt that it would have brought disgrace upon the society of the faithful, if any person who had committed a flagrant crime had been allowed to remain amongst them, or to

* 1 Cor. v. 2 Thess. iii. 6—14.

live upon terms of intimacy with the members after he was excluded. In all times, as circumstances may render excommunication necessary, it is natural for the office-bearers of the church to warn the people against that familiar intercourse with the excommunicated, which might corrupt their own manners; and if the people approve of the sentence, they will be inclined to support it, by behaving to the excommunicated with a degree of distance and reserve, expressive of the sentiments with which they regard his condition. At the same time, it follows clearly from the second position, that the civil effects of excommunication depend entirely upon human laws. They vary with times and circumstances; and the church has no right to say that a sentence, excluding a person from the participation of the ordinances of religion, shall in any manner affect his liberty, his property, or his condition as a member of civil society. The time indeed was, when, from the superstitious fears of ignorance, and the deep persevering policy of the church of Rome, the excommunicated was considered as having forfeited not only the privileges of a citizen, but the rights of a man; when subjects were absolved from their allegiance to an excommunicated prince, when all the connexions of human life were understood to be dissolved by this sentence, and according to the system of the ancient druids, *quibus ita interdictum est, iis omnes decedunt, et aditum eorum sermonemque defugiunt.** These exertions of spiritual tyranny are the tale of former times; and however earnestly the office-bearers of the church may warn the people against associating freely with the excommunicated, and however much the people may think it their duty and their wisdom to listen to this warning, it is now clearly understood that excommunication has no civil effects independent of positive statute.

In England, where a great deal of civil business is transacted through the medium of the spiritual courts, excommunication being the sentence pronounced upon those who are contumacious, and the instrument by which the spiritual courts support their authority, is made by statute to infer certain legal disabilities; and if the excommuni-

* Cæs. de Bell. Gall. vi. 13.

cated does not submit to the authority of the ecclesiastical courts within forty days, the bishop, *i. e.* his delegate, who exercises jurisdiction in his name within his diocese, may apply to the civil courts for a writ, *de excommunicato capiendo.* The civil courts are thus constituted judges of the occasion upon which the sentence was pronounced, and may either lend their assistance to the spiritual courts, or refuse the writ, as they see cause. The effect of the writ being issued, is, that the excommunicated person is committed to prison, and remains there without bail till he submits. In Scotland, where there is hardly any civil business before the ecclesiastical courts, excommunication, according to the original design of that sentence, and the practice of the primitive church, is pronounced only in the case of those offences which fall properly under the cognizance of a society invested with spiritual power. The legal disabilities which it inferred in ancient times were abolished after the Revolution; and it is in this country purely a spiritual censure.

It is not upon this account a nugatory sentence. It may, indeed, be pronounced in so unadvised a manner as to be contemptible; and an ill-timed display of spiritual power may do more harm than good. In this case the fault lies with the office-bearers of the church. Even when it is just and well founded, it may be despised by men who have no sense of religion, and no desire to maintain the appearances of decency in the eyes of their neighbours. With them, it only shares the contempt which they pour upon all the institutions of the Gospel; but every person, who believes that Christ, a teacher sent from God, established a visible society upon earth, and required his disciples, as members of that society, to unite in acts of worship, by which they testify their reverence for their common master, and promote the edification of one another, must consider a sentence by which he is justly excluded from that society as placing him in a dreadful situation; and although it does not produce any consequences that are immediately felt to be hurtful in the business and common intercourse of life; yet if, in this state of separation, he retains the faith of the Gospel, his mind will not be at ease, till he takes every proper and competent method of being restored to the communion of the church.

3. My third general position is, that the spiritual power implied in church government, being derived from the Lord Jesus, is subordinate to his sovereign authority over the church.

The whole system of truth revealed in the Gospel directs our attention to Jesus Christ, as the person by whose generous interposition the human race was redeemed; and it is stated, that, in recompense of the sufferings which he underwent in accomplishing this object, "all things are put under his feet, and God hath given him to be the head over all things to the church."* As every doctrine is false, therefore, which derogates from any of the offices that belong to Jesus as the Saviour of the world, and which pretends to substitute any thing else in place of his interposition, so all authority in the church that is not derived from him must be an usurpation. Neither is it enough that those who exercise the authority use his name in acknowledgment of the origin of their power; for the sovereign authority of the Lord Jesus requires, that what they profess to derive from him, they uniformly exercise according to his directions. Although he said to his apostles, "He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me;"† yet the commission which he gave them was, "Go, make disciples of all nations, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."‡ That commission implies, that the apostles were entitled to respect and obedience from the Christian world, only while they spoke agreeably to those words which their Master had put into their mouth, and which his Spirit brought to their remembrance. Accordingly, our Lord condemned the Pharisees, the religious teachers of his day, because, while they sat in Moses' seat, they taught for doctrines the commandments of men, and made the word of God of none effect by their traditions: and he warned his disciples against that submission to those who taught in his name, which the Jewish people paid to their teachers, saying, "Be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon earth, for one is your Father,

* Ephes. i. 22. † Luke x. 16.
‡ Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

which is in heaven. Neither be ye masters; for one is your Master, even Christ."* It is known, indeed, that Jesus, having confined his own teaching to the land of Judea, committed the propagation of his religion in other countries to the labours of his apostles, that he left it to them to make the necessary provision for the continued instruction of Christians in all parts of the world, and that the Christian church received its form, not from any thing that is recorded to us as having been said by him, but from the orders given by his apostles in their discourses and their writings. It is in like manner conceivable that the apostles, who did not even travel over all the regions which have already received the Gospel, who saw only the beginnings of the Christian society, and who lived in times of persecution, might leave it to the wisdom of succeeding teachers to accommodate the apostolical establishment to the more enlarged and more peaceful state of the Christian church. But as the apostles unquestionably followed the spirit of those instructions, which they received from Jesus when he spoke to them after his resurrection "of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God," so every legitimate exercise of authority, in succeeding ages, is regulated by the words of Jesus and his apostles. As no body of men, acting in his name, has a right to declare that to be a doctrine of his which he did not teach, or that to be an institution of his which he did not appoint, so he is to be considered, according to his promise, as "alway, even unto the end of the world," with those who bear office in his church, superintending the regulations which they frame, and the acts which they perform in his name; giving his sanction to those which are agreeable to the spirit of his religion; but bearing his testimony against his ministers, when, forgetting the subjection which is implied in the origin of their power, they encroach upon the authority of him who is the supreme Teacher, Lawgiver, and Judge; the Head of his body the church; the King of his own kingdom.

All Protestants hold that the infallibility, the dominion over the faith of Christians, the power of dispensing with the laws of Christ, or of adding to Scripture by tradition,

* Matt. xxiii. 8, 9, 10.

and many of the other claims advanced by the Bishop of Rome, and for many ages submitted to by a great part of Christendom, were a daring invasion of the sovereignty of Christ; and one of the great principles of Protestantism is a rejection of all authority in the church that is not subordinate to him. Some Protestant churches have been accused of departing from this principle in their practice, by making additions to the laws of Christ, and by exercising, in his name, powers which he did not delegate to his office-bearers. If the charge should in some instances be true, it is only a proof that churches, calling themselves Protestant, often retain some of the corruptions of Popery. But when we apply the general principles to particular cases, it will probably appear that the charge arises merely from a difference of opinion amongst Protestants, with regard to the number and extent of those matters, which the Lord Jesus has left subject to human regulations; and that those who are accused of invading his prerogative are as incapable as their brethren of claiming any authority, which they consider as opposite to his authority, or even as co-ordinate with it.

There was a phrase used in England by authority, at the beginning of the Reformation, which gave great offence to the more zealous adversaries of the church of Rome, and appeared to them inconsistent with this third position. It was said in the edition of the thirty-nine articles, which was published in the reign of Edward, "The king of England is supreme head in earth, next under Christ, of the churches of England and Ireland." This was conceived to transfer to the king of England all that usurped power, with regard to the churches in his dominions, which the Pope had exercised with regard to the church universal; and it was said that a title which the apostle seems to give exclusively to Christ, when he calls him "the head of the church," was not fitly applied to any mortal. In order to remove these scruples, the phrase was omitted in the edition of the thirty-nine articles, published in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, which is now the received and authentic edition; and the queen, by a solemn declaration, explained the act of supremacy, which was past upon the abolition of papal jurisdiction, to mean no more than "that under God she had the sovereignty and rule over all man-

ner of persons born within her realm, either ecclesiastical or temporal; so as no other foreign power shall or ought to have any superiority over them." The confession of faith of the church of Scotland, having been composed at a season, when the circumstances of the times were understood to call for a testimony against the revival of any claims, which might be abused as an engine of spiritual tyranny, declares, chap. xxv. that "there is no other head of the church but the Lord Jesus Christ; nor can the Pope of Rome, in any sense, be head thereof." This clause in our confession of faith leads us, upon solemn occasions, to use a phrase, which, I believe, is seldom used in England, "The Lord Jesus, the king and head of his church." But the use of this phrase does not constitute any mark of difference in opinion between the two churches, with regard to the third position. For both acknowledge the sovereign authority of the Lord Jesus, to which all other authority in the church is subordinate; and were we to apply this general principle to particular cases, we should find that the two churches differ less in the application, than superficial observers or hot disputants are willing to allow.

4. The spiritual power implied in church government is given "for edification and not for destruction." I employ this phrase, because it is used by the apostle Paul, 2 Cor. x. 8, and xiii. 10, in relation to his authority, εις οικοδομην, και ουκ εις καθαιρεσιν ὑμων. It is equally applicable to the authority of the office-bearers of the church in every age; and it expresses most significantly what I mean to include under this fourth position.

Those who entertain just views of civil government consider it as instituted by God for the good of the subjects. It is not for the sake of one, or of a few, to gratify their ambition, and to minister to their pleasure, that others are made inferior to them in rank, subject in many respects to their command, and dependent upon their protection. But all the privileges, and honours, and powers which distinguish individuals, are conferred upon them for the sake of the multitude, that by these distinctions they may be the more proper and successful instruments of communicating to those who are undistinguished the blessings of good government. The spirit of enlarged benevolence, which

forms the character of the Gospel, gives us perfect assurance, that the church government created by that religion has the like impartial destination. The great prophet, who "came not to be ministered unto but to minister," "the shepherd and bishop of souls," who came "to seek and to save that which was lost," taught his apostles to do as he had done; and they, instructed by his discourse, and guided by his example, spoke and acted as the servants of those, over whom they exercised the authority that was committed to them. "Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy. We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."* "All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos, or Cephas. Who is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, as the Lord gave to every man?"† Paul reminds the servant of the Lord, to whom was committed the care of the church, that "he must be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those who oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;"‡ and Peter exhorts the elders, who had the oversight of the flock, to behave "not as lords over God's heritage, but as ensamples to the flock."§

It is manifest, then, that the government, which Christ has established in his church, was not intended by him to create a separate interest in the Christian society, by aggrandizing a particular order of men, and for their sake placing all others in a state of humiliating subjection. It is one branch of the provision which is made in the Gospel for propagating and maintaining the truth, for restraining vice, for assisting Christians in the discharge of their duty, and for promoting the universal practice of virtue; and when we consider the power which church government implies, as thus instrumental in carrying forward the great cause for which Christ died, we are taught to expect in the operation of this instrument the same regard to the reasonable nature of man, and the same tender consideration of every circumstance essential to his comfort, which,

* 2 Cor. i. 24; iv. 5.
† 1 Cor. iii. 5, 21, 22.
‡ 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25.
§ 1 Peter v. 1, 2, 3.

appear in other institutions of the Gospel. The exercise of a power which is purely spiritual cannot indeed affect the lives or the outward estate of Christians. But men have other rights as sacred as those which respect their persons or their properties. There is liberty of thought, the right which every man has of exercising the powers of his mind upon any subject, from which he hopes to derive pleasure or improvement. There is the right of private judgment, which necessarily results from liberty of thought, the right which every man has of forming his own opinions, and of determining for himself what he ought to do. He may form the opinion and the determination hastily or upon false grounds; but he is not a rational agent, if he conceives it to be his duty implicitly to allow another to form them for him. There is liberty of conscience, that branch of the right of private judgment which respects our duty to God; the right which every man has of judging what God requires of him, and of resisting any attempt to teach for doctrines the commandments of men, or to impose obedience to regulations merely human, as a matter of conscience towards God.

As these rights belong to the nature of a moral and accountable creature, any power which could claim the privilege of violating them would be given not for edification, but for destruction. It would destroy, not perhaps the person, but the character of the being over whom it was exercised; it would degrade his mind; and it is so diametrically opposite to the general conduct of the Almighty towards his reasonable creatures, to the style of argument by which Jesus always called forth into exercise the understandings of those who heard him, and to all the other parts of the provision which he has made for enlarging and improving the minds of his disciples, that this cannot possibly be the description of any power instituted by him.

It was not necessary to dwell long upon the proof of the third and fourth positions; because, after the meaning of the terms is fairly stated, the truth of them appears hardly controvertible. But it was necessary to enumerate them thus distinctly, because they are the foundation of my fifth general position, which assumes the third and fourth as proven, and applies them to a variety of subjects.

5. The power implied in church government is limited

by the sovereign authority of the Lord Jesus, and the liberties of his disciples, both as to the objects which it embraces, and as to the manner in which it is exercised.

It professes to maintain the credit of religion, by preserving the truth uncorrupted, and by watching over the conduct of Christians; and it professes to minister to the edification of individuals, by affording them various assistance in following after righteousness, and by employing various means to reclaim them from error and vice. These objects are in themselves excellent; but it is not competent for church government to take every conceivable method of accomplishing them, because a spiritual power subordinate to the Lord Jesus, and not given for destruction, is restrained by these characters from doing many things, which, at particular times, may appear expedient. No exercise of any power can be legitimate, which is in direct opposition to the nature of that power; and the evils arising from admitting a contradiction between the general character of the power, and a particular exertion of it, will, in the result, infinitely overbalance any local or temporary advantage, which might be purchased by an exercise of the power that is illegitimate.

In applying the limits suggested by the third and fourth positions, to the power implied in church government, the easiest and safest method is to follow an established distribution. The subject has been so fully canvassed since the Reformation, that we may be assured none of the objects which require to be considered under the fifth position were omitted by the many able men, who, with much zeal, particularly in the course of the seventeenth century, combated one another upon the various questions to which it has given birth. Taking, therefore, the distribution which is found in the ordinary systems, I shall divide church power into three parts, which, for the sake of memory, are expressed by three single words; the *potestas* δογματικη, διαταχτικη, and διαχριτικη. The first respects δογματα, doctrines or articles of faith; the second respects διαταξεις, ecclesiastical canons or constitutions; the third respects discipline, or the exercise of judgment in inflicting or removing censures.

To each of these three I shall apply the limits and regulations suggested by the third and fourth positions.

CHAP. IV.

ARTICLES OF FAITH.

I. THE *potestas δογματικη* is limited and regulated by the sovereign authority of the Lord Jesus, and the liberties of his disciples.

The church of Rome, in the progress of that influence which she acquired over the Christian world, laid down the following positions, which were received as true by the members of her communion:—That the authority of Scripture, its right to the faith and obedience of Christians, depends entirely upon the testimony of the church: that besides the written word, consisting of the books which Christians receive in consequence of the judgment of the church, there is also an unwritten word, of which the church are the keepers: that it does not appear to have been intended that the Scriptures should contain a complete rule of faith and manners; but that this defect, which arose unavoidably from their having been written by different authors upon particular occasions, is fully remedied by those traditions, which, although not written in any apostolical book, have been safely conveyed down through the church from the days of the apostles: that these traditions, pertaining either to faith or to morals, are to be received with the same piety and reverence as the Scriptures: and that the church, by being in possession of this unwritten word, is qualified in its teaching to supply the imperfection of the written word: that the Scriptures, being in many places obscure, it is impossible for the people, by the exercise of their own faculties, to derive from thence the knowledge of all things necessary to salvation; and that their attempting to form opinions

for themselves out of the Scriptures, while it cannot lead them certainly to the truth, may produce a multiplicity of dangerous errors, and much bitter contention: that, to avoid these evils, it is, in general, expedient to debar the people from the free use of the Scriptures, or to grant it only to those whom their teachers judge the least likely to abuse that privilege: that the church, being assisted by the Spirit of God in the search of the Scriptures, having the promise of the presence of Jesus to the end of the world, and having possession of the unwritten word as a commentary upon the written, is the only safe interpreter of Scripture, and the supreme judge, by whose definitive sentence all controversies with regard to the meaning of particular passages, or the general doctrine of Scripture, must be determined: that it is the duty of Christians to acquiesce in this infallible determination; and that, although they do not understand the grounds upon which it rests, or although other doctrines than those which the church declares to be true appear to their minds agreeable to Scripture, it is presumption and impiety, a breach of that reverence which they owe to the institution of Christ, and a sin for which they deserve everlasting punishment, to oppose their own private judgment, which cannot of itself attain the truth, and which may depart very far from it, to the decision of the church which cannot err: that the faith which becomes the dutiful subjects of the kingdom of Christ, and by which they are saved, is an entire submission of the understanding to the decisions of the church; a faith which does not include a knowledge of the things believed, which is more fitly defined by ignorance, and which supposes nothing more than an implicit and cordial acquiescence in all that is taught by the church.

The foregoing positions, or doctrines of the church of Rome, are combated in different parts of the ordinary systems. I have brought them together in one view, in order to give a full account of the extent of the *potestas δογματικη*, as claimed by that church. And I need not stop to expose the monstrous nature of a claim, which constitutes the great body of Christians mere machines; which invades the prerogative, and usurps the office and the honours of the great Prophet, whom it is the duty of

Christians to hear; and which, by ascribing to the church an infallibility which is nowhere promised, and which is inconsistent with the weakness of humanity, has produced in that church errors, contradictions, and absurdities, which appear to every rational inquirer most disgraceful and pernicious to those by whom they are held.

To so monstrous a claim all Protestants agree in opposing this principle, that the Scriptures are the only rule of faith. This principle they understand to include the following positions:—The authority of the books of the New Testament does not depend upon the judgment of the church. The history of what we call the canon of the New Testament may be thus stated. While many books, which claimed to be written by divine inspiration, were rejected in early times, those which we now receive were declared to be canonical, because they had been conveyed down from the days of the apostles, with satisfying evidence of their authority. This evidence, as laid before those who fixed the canon of the New Testament, consisted of internal marks of authenticity, of which a scholar in every age is equally qualified to judge, of the consent of the Christian world, of the testimony of adversaries to the Christian faith, and of many collateral circumstances, which must have been better known to them than to us, who live at such a distance from the date of the books. But had any early council presumed to contradict the amount of this evidence, by rejecting a book which was authentic, or admitting one which was spurious, the voice of the Christian world would have risen against so daring a decision; and the remains of Christian antiquity which have reached our days, would have enabled us to disregard it. In judging, then, of the authenticity of the books of the New Testament, we pay no further regard to the decision of the church than as it constitutes a part of that tradition which must be the voucher of every book written in a remote age; and having satisfied ourselves in the only rational manner—in the same manner as we do with regard to all other ancient books—that the books of the New Testament were written by the persons whose names they bear, we learn from the evidence of the divine mission of Jesus, and from the nature of the commission given to his apostles, of both which we are qualified to

judge, the entire respect and credit which are due to every thing contained in the books.

Now, this credit which is due to the books, not upon account of the testimony of the church, but upon their own account, includes a belief of their sufficiency and their perfection. It does not admit of what the church of Rome calls tradition, or an unwritten word, being put upon a level with them. It implies, that all things necessary to salvation are contained in the books themselves; that the attainment of the knowledge of these things is not attended with difficulties, so insuperable to an individual as to render the judgment of the church indispensably necessary; that every person who has the use of reason may, by a proper exercise of his rational powers, and by availing himself of the opportunities within his reach, satisfy his mind what is the doctrine of Scripture, and understand that doctrine as far as it is necessary he should understand it; and consequently, that no individual Christian is required to exercise an implicit faith, of which he can give no other account than that it rests upon the authority of the church; but that as it is contrary to the laws of his nature to believe what appears to him absurd, so it is a duty, required of him by his divine teacher, to "search the Scriptures," so as to judge for himself, that what he professes to believe is therein contained, and thus to be able to give a reason of his faith and hope.

By stating the foregoing positions, I have endeavoured to unfold that principle, which, being characteristical of Protestantism, is avowed by all who have departed from the errors of the church of Rome. But it is held under different modifications; and those who agree in receiving the Scriptures as a sufficient rule of faith, and as the only authoritative rule, do not agree concerning the power reserved to the church as to the doctrines of religion.

The followers of Socinus, who were among the earliest Reformers, were led, by the general principles of their system, to an extreme solicitude in guarding against the abuses of ecclesiastical authority; and having, upon many points, departed very far from the received opinions of Christians, they were obliged, in self-defence, to lay down such a plan of church government, as did not admit that the church at any time possessed the right of intermed-

dling in articles of faith. The Socinians hold, that as the Scriptures are the rule of faith, the essential articles of faith are so few, so simple, and so easily gathered out of clear explicit passages, that it is impossible for any man who has the exercise of his reason to miss them; that all the mistakes and differences of opinion amongst those who search the Scriptures respect points which are not essential, and concerning which it is both vain and hurtful to try to establish an uniformity of opinion; that it is in all cases a sufficient declaration of Christian faith to say that we believe the Scriptures; that no harm can arise from allowing every man to interpret Scripture as he pleases; and that, as Scripture may be sufficiently understood for the purposes of salvation, without any foreign assistance, all creeds and confessions of faith, composed and prescribed by human authority, are an encroachment upon the prerogative of the supreme teacher, an invasion of the right of private judgment, and a pernicious attempt to substitute the commandments of men in place of the doctrine of God.

According to this plan, there is left to the church and its ministers, in their teaching, merely the office of exhortation. Over the doctrines, which are the principles upon which the exhortation proceeds, it is conceived to be incompetent that they should have any control; and both the proceedings of ecclesiastical assemblies, and the ministrations of private teachers, are understood to depart from their proper sphere, and to be very much misemployed, when, instead of confining themselves to recommendations of the practice of virtue, they intermeddle with points of doctrine, all of which are either so plain, that they cannot be illustrated, or so unimportant, that every one may be allowed, according to an ancient phrase which is often used, to abound in his own sense.

To most Protestant churches this plan appears very defective; and when I state the following views, you will perceive how far it falls short of the purposes, for which a church seems to have been established by Christ.

The books of the New Testament are written in a language which is now understood only by the learned. Yet, in that language, it was intended they should be sent over the world to be the rule of faith to all Christians. How-

ever plain, therefore, these books might be to the nations who spoke that language, the great body of the people in all other countries stand in need of an interpreter. They are ignorant of the meaning of single words and phrases. If different translations are offered, they do not know which is most correct; and consequently they must remain in doubt and suspense, unless there is some human authority upon which they can rest.

But further, after the meaning of single words and phrases is analysed, there still remain in all ancient books many passages which cannot be understood without a knowledge of local customs; of points in chronology, geography, and history; of figures of speech; and of that peculiar character which every language derives from the manners and the science of those by whom it is spoken. It is impossible that the great body of the people in any country can make the necessary progress in so large and multifarious a branch of study; so that here also, as well as in the meaning of single words and phrases, they must rest upon the authority of others. Our Lord has not left these wants of his disciples to be supplied in a casual manner, by any person more learned than themselves whom they chance to meet. But having provided, in the constitution of his religion, a standing method of instruction, he directs all, who in searching the Scriptures feel their own deficiencies, to have recourse to the persons who are set over them in the Lord. When the apostles went forth to make disciples of all nations, they were enabled, by the gift of tongues, to speak so as to be understood by all who heard them. Now that the written word of the apostles is transmitted to future ages in a particular language, the learning of the Christian teachers may render that written word as intelligible to the people, as if they themselves understood the original language; and since the Christian teachers appeared to us formerly, as intended by Christ to constitute a society co-operating for the same great purpose, it is natural to expect that, instead of a private rendering of the Scriptures by every individual teacher, all who minister to persons speaking the same language, will join in preparing or adopting a common translation. This translation, recommended by the concurrent authority of the body of teachers, will give the people all the assurance

which the nature of the case admits, or which it requires, that the book which they read is the same in sense with that which was written by the apostles; and this book, receiving in the ministrations of the individual teachers those elucidations, which their knowledge of antiquity, and the fruits of their various studies qualify them to give, will be "profitable" to all "for instruction in righteousness."

It appears, then, to be unquestionable, that the successive teachers in the Christian church were intended to be interpreters and expounders of the sacred books; and that one part of the office assigned them is, to afford the disciples of Christ that assistance in learning the truth therein contained, of which, from the nature of the books, the language in which they were written, and the customs of the persons addressed in them, the great body of the people in every country stand much in need. But there is a farther part of their office, in relation to the doctrines of religion, which a due attention to the subject does not suffer us to omit. When we recollect the language and the spirit of the directions given to Timothy and Titus, and when we hear Paul saying to Timothy, ii. 2, "The things that thou hast heard of me, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also," we are led to consider the succession of Christian teachers as intended to be the guardians of that truth which may be learned from the Scriptures; and the church, the great society composed of those teachers, is presented to our view under the idea of the keepers of a sacred deposit, over which they are appointed to watch. It is by the illustration of this idea that we show the imperfection of what I stated as the Socinian plan.

The foundation of the character of a disciple of Christ is laid in the acknowledgment of a system of divine truth. That system may be learned by searching the Scriptures. But our Lord and his Apostles do not lead us to suppose, that it is learned by every person into whose hands the Scriptures are put, or who professes to expound them. Our Lord gives notice of false prophets, who should come to his disciples in sheep's clothing, while inwardly they were ravening wolves.* The apostles saw the fulfilment of

* Matt. vii. 15.

this prediction; and their Epistles abound with complaints of false teachers, men "who corrupted the word of God; who had erred concerning the truth; who subverted whole houses, teaching things which they ought not; who brought in damnable heresies; who were moved not by the spirit of truth, but by the spirit of error; men unlearned and unstable, who wrested the Scriptures to their own destruction." * The Apostles mention many particular errors which had arisen in their days; they combat them with zeal; they call upon Christians to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the saints," and to "beware lest any man spoil them through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men;" and they represent as one of the purposes for which Christ gave prophets, and apostles, and evangelists, *i. e.* for which he established a church, Eph. iv. 13, that Christians might "be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about παντι ανεμῳ της διδασκαλιας, with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." In like manner the Apostle thus writes to the Hebrews, xiii. 7, 8, 9, "Remember them which have the rule over you; who have spoken to you the word of God; whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines." These verses, when taken in connexion, present this whole sense, that as the doctrine of Christ, like himself, is unchangeable, his disciples, instead of hastily adopting the various opinions which may happen to be in circulation, should continue in the truth which they receive from the spiritual teachers, who are set over them in the Lord, imitating their faith. In order to qualify the Christian teachers to perform the important service implied in these passages, the Apostle exhorts Timothy, and through him, every succeeding minister of the Gospel, "to hold fast the form of sound words." He excites him to the assiduous exercise of his talents in counteracting the restless and insidious attempts of seducers; and he introduces the following words, Titus i.

* 2 Cor. ii. 17. 2 Tim. ii. 18 Titus i. 11; 2 Pet. ii. 1; iii. 6; 1 John iv. 6.

9, 10, 11, into the description of what a bishop or minister ought to be, " Holding fast the faithful word, as he hath been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, whose mouths must be stopped." These directions of the Apostle apply by parity of reason to the heresies, which he gives notice were to arise in latter times, as well as to those which he himself combated. They impose a duty upon the ministers of religion, and consequently they create a corresponding duty in the people to whom they minister; in other words, while they invest the ministers of religion with some kind of authority in relation to its doctrines, they require a degree of reverence for every lawful exercise of that authority. They teach clearly that an acknowledgment of the truth of Scripture is not a sufficient security for soundness of faith, because they state a perversion of Scripture by those who have received it, as not only a possible case, but as a case which then actually existed; and consequently they imply that it is lawful for the ministers of religion to employ some additional guard to that " form of sound words," which they are required to hold fast and to defend.

Two striking instances of a perversion of Scripture, in the days of the Apostles are mentioned, the one by Paul, the other by John. In his Epistles to Timothy, Paul speaks of Hymeneus and Philetus, who " concerning the truth had erred, saying that the resurrection is past already, and overthrew the faith of some;" *i. e.* they did not deny that the Scriptures speak of a resurrection, but by an allegorical interpretation, they resolved all the declarations of the future resurrection of the body into a figurative expression of the present renovation of the heart and life, which is produced in Christians by the grace of the Gospel. John, in his first and second Epistles, speaks of deceivers, whom he calls Antichrist, persons moved by a spirit in opposition to Christ, " who confessed not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh." They did not deny that the Scriptures speak of his manifestation, but they thought that the most rational interpretation of the words of Scripture is found by considering the body of Christ as a phantasm, which answered the purpose of his

holding communication with men, without subjecting the Son of God to that degradation, and his religion to the many difficulties, which appeared to them to arise from his being allied with a material substance. Now both these kinds of deceivers, because they did not hold the truth of Scripture, although they spoke the words of Scripture, were opposed by the Apostles, who earnestly warned the Christians to beware of their doctrine. In like manner, therefore, when in future ages some arose who said that Jesus is the Son of God, but who gave such an interpretation of that phrase, as rendered it consistent with the opinion which they avowed, that Jesus was a mere man; when others spoke in the language of Scripture, concerning the Spirit, but considering that language as meaning nothing more than the influence of God, published as a part of their creed that the Holy Ghost is not a divine person; when others interpreted all the variety of expressions, in which Jesus is said to have died for sin, as meaning only that our sin was the occasion of his death, and that his death tended to take away sin, but not as conveying any idea of atonement; when such opinions arose, and were held, and defended, and propagated by men who professed to venerate the Scriptures, those Christian teachers who considered the divinity of our Saviour, the personality of the Spirit, and the doctrine of atonement, to be important branches of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, were not only warranted, but were called to combat these opinions, to guard "the form of sound words" from corruption, and to warn the Christians committed to their charge against being led aside by these perversions of Scripture. It was not enough to exhort Christians to believe what the Scriptures declared upon these points: for those, who were accused of perverting the Scriptures, professed this belief. It was not possible to have recourse to any such infallible authority as that which the apostles exerted, when they branded, as fundamental errors, the doctrines of Hymeneus and other deceivers, who arose in their days. There is clear evidence that Jesus did not intend any such infallible authority should continue to exist in his church; yet in all ages the Scriptures have been liable to perversion; in all ages it appears to have been part of the charge committed to the

Christian teachers to maintain and defend the truth; and it is left to them to devise the most prudent and effectual methods of fulfilling that duty.

The mode of fulfilling this duty, to which the Christian teachers very early had recourse, was of the following kind. When they apprehended a danger of the propagation of false opinions concerning an important article of Christian faith, they assembled in larger or smaller numbers, from more or fewer districts, according to circumstances. In these assemblies, which are known by the name of councils, and which gradually assumed the forms essential to the orderly transaction of business in a great meeting, the controverted points were canvassed; and the opinion, which appeared to the council agreeable to Scripture, was declared in words so contrived, as to form their explicit testimony against the opinions which they accounted erroneous. It is not impossible that this method of deciding controversies was suggested to the early Christians by the practice of the States of ancient Greece, who held councils upon important occasions. But it is of more importance to observe that the method appears to be agreeable both to the nature of the case and to Scripture. It is agreeable to the nature of the case. For the consent of a number of teachers in any doctrine was the best security of their having attained the truth, which their fallibility admitted; and the unequivocal declaration of that consent was the most likely way of conciliating respect for their opinion, and of giving it that authority with the people, which might render it a preservative against error. This method, in itself natural and expedient, may be said to be agreeable to Scripture, and even to have received a sanction from the practice of the apostles. One of the earliest disputes in the Christian church respected the necessity of circumcision. Paul and Barnabas, after having had no small disputation in the regions where they laboured, went up to Jerusalem to consult the apostles and elders about this question. The apostles and elders, having met to consider the matter, and canvassed it at length, came to a definitive sentence, which they published in an epistle to the churches; and Paul, upon his return to the region which he had left, as he went through the cities, Acts xvi. 4, 5, "delivered them the decrees for to keep,

that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem; and so were the churches established in the faith."

It was most natural for the Christian teachers in future ages to consider this apostolic council, as a direction and a warrant with regard to the most expedient method of terminating the controversies which arose in their time. Accordingly, when the Arian opinions were propagated with zeal and success in the beginning of the fourth century, a council, which is known by the name of the first general council, was held at Nice under the authority of the Roman Emperor, then become a Christian, and declared in the creed, called the Nicene creed, the divinity and consubstantiality of the Son. A second council, held at Constantinople in the end of that century, declared, in opposition to the errors of Macedonius, the divinity and personality of the Holy Ghost; and two councils, held, the one at Ephesus and the other at Chalcedon, about the middle of the fifth century, testified their disapprobation of the systems taught by Nestorius and Eutyches, and declared what continues to be the received opinion in most Christian churches, concerning the union of the divine and human nature of our Saviour.

These four general councils are mentioned with honour in ecclesiastical history, and are spoken of by most Christian writers as entitled to a degree of respect, which is not due to any succeeding council. Not that they were, according to the literal sense of the word, general councils, *i. e.* assemblies consisting of deputies from all parts of Christendom. The difficulties which must occur to every person, who considers what such a meeting requires, are of such a kind, that it has never taken place in fact; and were it practicable, it would not derive from the number or the universality of the representation an infallible security against error. Neither is the peculiar respect paid to these councils founded on a belief, that every part of their proceedings was conducted in an unexceptionable manner. There might be much faction and altercation, weakness in some of the members, and political views in others. But they are respected, because the opinions which they declared appear to the great part of the Christian world to be founded in Scripture. We receive the opinions not for

the sake of the declaration of the councils; but we honour the councils for declaring opinions which we believe to be true; and we testify this honour by adopting, in our profession of those opinions, the significant phrases by which these early councils discriminated the truth from the errors with which it had been blended. Many of the succeeding councils declared what we believe to be false; and the council of Trent, held in the thirteenth century, which the Christian world had loudly demanded as the most effectual method of reforming the errors of the church of Rome, was so managed by the influence and artifice of the Pope, that it lent its authority to the establishment of those very errors.

When the Protestants of Germany judged it necessary for them to leave a church, whose corruptions they could find no method of correcting, they delivered to the diet of the empire as their apology, what is called the confession of Augsburg; Confessio Augustana; and in every kingdom and state, which afterwards left the communion of the church of Rome, an assembly of the teachers, held generally by the authority and direction of the state, compiled a confession of their faith, or a declaration of the truths which they believed to be contained in Scripture. These confessions, which differed from one another in some points, were, in general, so framed as to form a testimony against the errors of the church of Rome, without renouncing any of the truths which that church held; the Protestants wishing to hold themselves forth to the world as Christians, who retained the great doctrines of the Gospel unadulterated by any of the heresies which had arisen, and who forsook only those corruptions in doctrine and practice which a particular church had introduced. From these early confessions arose, in process of time, with some variations, what are called the Thirty-nine Articles of the church of England, what we call the Confession of Faith of the church of Scotland, and the Symbols, formularies, and Catechisms of other Protestant churches.

When the opinions of Arminius were spreading in Holland about the beginning of the seventeenth century, a council or synod was summoned at Dort by the authority of the States-General; and deputies were invited to attend from the neighbouring principalities, and from the

two churches of Great Britain. This council, which is known by the name of Synodus Dordracena, after sitting many months, condemned the tenets of Arminius, and published a declaration of the Christian faith upon the controverted points, for which some Protestant churches entertain a high respect, as it is agreeable to their opinions, and which others regard with indifference, or hold in contempt. The result of the Synod of Dort is a lesson to the Protestant church, that the expediency of general councils expired with the division of the Roman Empire; that in the present situation of Christendom it is chimerical to think of obtaining by this method any greater uniformity of doctrine, than already subsists among those who have left the communion of the church of Rome; and that in every independent kingdom or state, the Christian teachers, supported by the civil authority, in the manner that is agreed upon, are fully competent, without waiting for the judgment of Christians in other countries, to prepare such a general declaration of the Christian faith, and such occasional preservatives against error, as may answer the purposes for which the church was invested with what we have called the *potestas δογματικη*.

The objection commonly made to confessions of faith is, that they are too particular; that a declaration of faith, which is meant to unite Christians, should comprehend only the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, without descending to those controverted points, and those niceties of doctrine, upon which men have differed; and that it would in general be better that these confessions were expressed in the language of Scripture, than in the terms of human science.

The persons most ready to bring forward this objection are those, whose system excludes some of the doctrines which the great body of Protestants agree in receiving. In their manner of stating the objection, they are careful to conceal their disbelief of particular doctrines, under a zeal for liberty of conscience, and the right of private judgment; and instead of affirming that a confession declares what is false, they choose rather to say, that by the particularity with which it states the received opinion, it abridges and invades that freedom in every thing that con-

cerns religion, which Christians derive from the spirit of the Gospel.

The subject has, of late, received much discussion in England. The objection is stated with ability and eloquence in a book entitled the Confessional; and when you turn your attention to this matter, you will easily become acquainted with the answers and replies that have been published. I do not mean to enter into any detail, but simply to lead your thoughts to that answer to the objection, which may be deduced from the principles that have been stated.

It is easy to ask that only fundamental articles should be introduced into confessions; but it is not easy to say what articles are fundamental. There is no enumeration of them in Scripture; and no attempt that has ever been made to enumerate them has given universal satisfaction. The very point upon which different sects divide is, that some account articles fundamental, which to others appear unimportant; and that even things, which all admit to be fundamental, are held by some with such limitations, as appear to others very much to enervate their meaning. It is certainly not desirable that confessions should descend to minute controversies; and perhaps all of them might be abridged. But the very purpose for which they are composed, being to guard against error, it is plain that they become nugatory, if they deliver the truths of religion in those words of Scripture which had been perverted, or in terms so general as to include both the error and the truth.

In judging how far the particularity of confessions invades the right of private judgment, it is necessary to attend to an essential distinction between the condition of teachers and that of the people. The confession, in which any number of teachers unites, is that "form of sound words," which they think they find in Scripture, and which they consider it as their duty to "hold fast." Every teacher, who belongs to the community, is of course supposed to assent to the truths contained in their confession; and the community of teachers ought not to admit any person to take part of their ministry, unless by his subscribing the confession, or declaring his sentiments in some

other way, they know that he entertains the opinions which are there published. Without some such requisition, the confession of the community, and the ministrations of the individual teachers, might be in opposition to one another. Many of them, holding opinions that were condemned in the confession, and animated with zeal for the propagation of those opinions, might instil into the minds of the people the very errors against which it was the purpose of the confession to guard them; and thus the negligence of the community would become the instrument of exposing the people to be "carried about with divers and strange doctrines," of inflaming their breasts with that animosity which generally attends religious disputes, and of bringing upon them those evils from which they would have been preserved, if there had been an uniformity in the doctrine of their teachers. If, then, the church in general, and any division of the church, consisting of the office-bearers of a particular district, united in a society, have a right to declare their opinion concerning controverted points, and if it is part of the duty of their office by a declaration of this opinion to oppose the propagation of error, it follows, by consequence, from this right and this duty, that they are entitled to require from every person, to whom they convey the powers implied in ordination, a declaration of his assent to their opinions. This is merely prescribing the terms of admission to a particular office; it is employing the nature of the office to regulate the qualifications; and it is no infringement of the right of private judgment, because if any person does not possess the qualifications, or does not choose to comply with the terms, he has only to turn his attention to some other office. For if, instead of becoming a teacher, he prefers to continue one of the people in the Christian society, he is under no obligation to declare his assent to the confession, which has been published by the teachers as the declaration of their faith, and the directory of their teaching. How far heretics are liable to censure, will be considered, when we speak of the judicial power of the church. What I am now stating is this essential distinction between the teachers and the people in a Christian society, that the judgment of the body of the people is not necessarily concluded under the judgment of the of-

fice-bearers; in other words, that the *potestas δογματικη*, which we conceive to be inherent in the nature of the church, does not imply a right of imposing upon the consciences of Christians the belief of that which the church has determined to be true.

From this account of the *potestas δογματικη*, as exercised by Protestants, it appears to be neither inconsistent with the supremacy of Christ, nor destructive of the liberties of Christians. It is not inconsistent with the supremacy of Christ; because it is purely ministerial, professing to interpret the words of Christ and his apostles; proving out of them all the assertions which it publishes; directing to them as the infallible standard of truth; and warning Christians against listening to any other doctrine than that which Christ commanded to be taught. The confessions of Protestant churches claim to be true, not in respect of the authority by which they are composed, but in respect of their conformity to the words of Scripture; and therefore, instead of invading, they assert the prerogative of the Supreme Teacher. Nor is it inconsistent with the liberties of Christians. When Christian teachers either give a general declaration of the faith, or bear testimony occasionally against particular errors, a respect is certainly due to the judgment of men invested with an office in the church, and exercising this office for a purpose which is declared in Scripture to be important. But this respect does not imply a submission of the understanding. It is acknowledged that the decision, proceeding from fallible men, may be erroneous; and that it is the duty of Christians to "judge of themselves what is right, to search the Scriptures whether the things are so, to try the spirits, whether they be of God." This exercise of the *potestas δογματικη* may give warning of error; may detect the sophistry upon which the error rests, and may collect the proofs of the sound doctrine. All these are helps, which private Christians derive from that order of men instituted by Christ for the edification of his body, the church. But the understanding is not overruled, because it is assisted; with these helps Christians are only better able to exercise their understanding, upon subjects less familiar to them than to their teachers: and if, after making the proper use of this assistance, they are satisfied that the deci-

sion of the church is not well founded, and that what the church brands as an error is agreeable to the word of God, they are perfectly acquitted in the judgment of their own consciences, and in the sight of God, for refusing to adhere to what appears to them an erroneous decision; and it is as much their duty to hold what they account true, although contrary to the judgment of the church, as it was the duty of the church to warn them against what she accounted an error.

And thus, by the *potestas δογματικη*, as claimed by Protestants, the church, according to the true meaning of that expression of Paul, 1 Tim. iii. 15, is "the pillar and ground of the truth," στυλος και ἑδραιωμα της αληθειας; not as it is interpreted in the church of Rome, the foundation upon which the truth rests, but the publisher and defender of the truth. In ancient times, edicts and other writings intended for the information of the people were affixed to pillars; and this was the legal method of promulgation. So the church declares, holds up to public view, the truth recorded in Scripture; and when the truth is attacked, the church by its decisions supports the truth, stating fairly what had been perverted, and exhibiting the proofs of what had been denied. It remains with those, to whom the church ministers, to compare what is inscribed upon the pillar with the original record, from which it professes to be taken, and to examine the statement and the proofs which are submitted to their consideration. The church discharges its office by warning them against error; they do their duty, when they listen with attention to the warning, and yet are careful not to be misled by those who are appointed to assist their endeavours in searching after the truth. If, in consequence of fulfilling this duty, they sometimes reject the truth which is proposed to them, and adopt erroneous tenets, this is only a proof, that, in the present imperfect state, uniformity of opinion is not consistent with the free exercise of the human understanding; and it is unquestionably better that men should sometimes err, than that they should be compelled to the acknowledgment of any system, by an authority which is not competent to fallible mortals, and which destroys the reasonable nature of those over whom it is exerted.

I conclude this subject with stating, that the view which

I have given of the *potestas δογματικη* is agreeable to the declared sentiments of both the churches in this island. In the 20th article of the church of England, are these words: "The church hath authority in matters of faith. And yet it is not lawful for the church to ordain any thing that is contrary to God's word written; neither may it so expound one place of Scripture, that it be contrary to another. Wherefore, although the church be a witness and keeper of holy writ, yet besides the same, ought it not to enforce any thing to be believed for necessity of salvation." In the 21st Article, it is said, "General councils, forasmuch as they be an assembly of men whereof all be not governed with the Spirit and word of God, may err, and sometimes have erred even in things pertaining unto God. Wherefore things ordained by them as necessary to salvation have neither strength nor authority, unless it may be declared that they are taken out of the holy Scriptures." The whole first chapter of our Confession of Faith, concerning the holy Scriptures, is a testimony against the *potestas δογματικη* claimed by the church of Rome. In the 31st chapter, it is said, "It belongeth to synods and councils ministerially to determine controversies of faith; and their determinations, if consonant to the word of God, are to be received with reverence and submission, not only for their agreement with the word, but also for the power whereby they are made, as being an ordinance of God, appointed thereunto in his word. All synods and councils, since the apostles, whether general or particular, may err, and many have erred; therefore they are not to be made the rule of faith or practice, but to be used as an help in both."

CHAP. V.

MATTERS OF ORDER. RITES AND CEREMONIES.

THE *potestas διαταχτικη*, that which respects ecclesiastical canons or constitutions, is limited and regulated by the sovereign authority of the Lord Jesus, and the liberties of his disciples.

The church of Rome, professing to be the keepers of an unwritten word, out of which they can supply at their pleasure the deficiencies of Scripture, and claiming an authority to which Christians owe implicit subjection, conceive that they have a right to enact laws which bind the conscience, and which cannot be transgressed without incurring the same penalties, which are annexed to every breach of the divine law. They have, in virtue of this claim, made numberless additions to the essential parts of the worship of God, which, although not enjoined in Scripture, they represent as indispensably necessary, in order to the acceptance of the worshipper. They impose restraints in the enjoyment of the comforts of life, in the formation of different connexions, and in the conduct of the business of society; restraints which, although not founded upon the word of God, cannot be broken through without incurring, in the judgment of the church, the guilt of a deadly sin. They not only command, upon pain of eternal damnation, many performances, as fasts, and penances, and pilgrimages, which the Scriptures do not require; but they even enjoin by their authority, as in the case of the worship of images, and other services which appear to us idolatrous, what the Scriptures seem to have forbidden; and they abridge the liberty of Christians by a multitude

of frivolous institutions, a compliance with which is not left to be regulated by the discretion and circumstances of individuals, but is bound rigorously upon all, unless the church chooses to give a dispensation from the duty, which her authority had created.

All this constitutes one large branch of what Protestants account the usurpation and tyranny of the church of Rome. It appears to them to be an encroachment upon the prerogative of the "one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy," who, having delivered in his word the laws of his kingdom, has not committed to any the power of altering, repealing, or multiplying these laws, but has left his disciples to learn, from his own discourses, and the writings of his apostles, "all things whatsoever he has commanded them to observe." By this encroachment upon the prerogative of the one Lawgiver, the rights of Christians too are invaded; because, instead of having to walk by a precise rule delivered in Scripture, which all may know, their consciences are subjected to regulations indefinite in number, which, depending upon the views and the pleasure of particular men, may not only become oppressive, but may involve them in the most distressing embarrassment, by requiring them, as a condition of salvation, to do that which to their own judgment appears sinful.

Against this usurpation and tyranny, all Protestants have revolted; and in opposition to it they hold that the church has no power to prescribe any new terms of acceptance with God, or any other conditions of salvation than those which are declared in Scripture; that every person who worships God according to the directions which he himself has given may hope, through the merits of Jesus, to please him; that the law of God is fulfilled by abstaining from what he has forbidden, and by doing what he has commanded; and that God alone being the Lord of conscience, no ecclesiastical regulation can justify us in doing what we account sinful, or in abstaining from what we think commanded: or can so far alter the nature of things as to convert an action, concerning which the word of God has not left any direction, into a necessary indispensable duty, which we may in no situation omit without incurring the divine displeasure.

Notwithstanding these limitations, which the supreme authority of Christ and the rights of his subjects obviously require, there remains a large field for the *potestas διαταχτικη*, and many questions have arisen amongst Christians concerning the proper and lawful exercise of it within that field.

There is one branch indeed of the exercise of the *potestas διαταχτικη*, which admits of no dispute. It may be employed in enforcing the laws of Christ; not that the authority of these laws derives any accession from that of the church. But as the church is the publisher and defender of the rule of faith contained in the Scriptures, so she is also the publisher and defender of the rule of practice there delivered. The ministers of religion, in their individual capacity, exhort and persuade Christians to observe this rule. When the rule is generally violated, or when it is perverted by gross misinterpretations which are likely to spread, the teachers of any district united in a society, forming what we call the church of that district, may address an admonition or explanation to all who are of their communion. The interposition of this visible authority may awaken the minds of the people to a recollection of that superior authority which is not an object of sense; and the infliction of those censures, which are within the power of the church, may serve as a warning of those judgments which the Almighty has reserved in his own power. In all churches there are standing laws of the church enjoining the great branches of morality. There are also occasional injunctions and ordinances prohibiting those transgressions which are most flagrant; reproofs and warnings against sins, which at any time particularly abound in a district. As no person who attends to the manners of the world will say that such laws, and injunctions, and reproofs, are unnecessary, so experience does not justify any person in saying that they are wholly ineffectual. While civil government prohibits many immoralities under this view, that they are hurtful to the peace of society, church government extends its prohibitions to other immoralities also, which do not fall under this description; and when the two conspire, as, if both are legitimately exercised, will never fail to be the case, they are of considerable use in restraining enormity of

transgression, and in preserving that decency of outward conduct, which is a great public benefit, and which, with many, might not proceed from the unassisted influence of religion.

It is unnecessary to dwell longer upon this undisputed exercise of the authority of the church in commanding what Christ has commanded, and forbidding what he has forbidden. The discussions, which the *potestas διαταχτικη* requires, respect those numberless occasions upon which the church is called to make enactments by her own authority. To these enactments there was applied, in early times, the name canons, which is derived from the Greek word *καιων*, *regula*, and which means to convey that these enactments are not put upon a footing with the laws of Christ; but, being subordinate to them, are merely regulations applying general laws to particular cases.

The first object of these regulations is what we may call matters of order. The church being a society, in which a number of persons are united, and are supposed frequently to assemble, there must be regulations enacted to give the outward polity of the society its form, to ascertain the terms upon which persons are admitted to bear office in the society, and to direct the time and place of assembling for all the members. It is manifest that such matters of order cannot be left to the discretion of individuals, because the variety of their determinations would produce confusion. It may be supposed that with regard to all such matters, individuals are ready to follow that authority which they unite in recognising; and if the Christian society is not necessarily dependent upon any human society, but may exist by itself, and has within itself the powers necessary for its own preservation, this authority of order must be lodged in the office-bearers of the society.

One of the most important circumstances of order in the Christian society is the time of holding the assemblies. I do not mean the hours, but the days, of meeting; a circumstance with regard to which an uniformity may naturally be expected in a society united by the same faith. It has been common for men in all ages to connect the remembrance of interesting events with the solemnization of the days, upon which such events originally happened:

and the first teachers of the Gospel appear to have given their sanction to this natural propensity, by changing the weekly rest, from the seventh day to the day upon which Christ rose from the dead. From emotions of respect and gratitude, and from the authority of this example, there was early introduced in the Christian church the annual solemnization of Christmas as the day upon which Christ was born; of Easter as the day upon which he rose; and of Whitsunday as the day upon which the Holy Ghost was poured forth. Although these anniversary solemnities were very early observed, there was not an uniform tradition in the church with regard to the precise day of the year, upon which each of the three events had happened. Even in the second century, there were violent disputes between the Asiatic and the western Christians, whether Easter should be kept always upon a Sunday, or whether, without regard to the day of the week, it should be kept on the third day after the day of the Jewish passover, which was considered as a type of the death of Christ, and which happened invariably upon the fourteenth day of the first Jewish month. This controversy, insignificant as it appears in our times, agitated the whole Christian world for many years, and was not decided till the council of Nice, giving their sanction to the practice of the western Christians, established throughout Christendom the observance of the day called Good Friday, in remembrance of Christ's death, and of the succeeding Sunday, in remembrance of his resurrection.

In the progress of the superstitions of the church of Rome, many days were consecrated to the memory of saints; and it was impressed upon the minds of the people, that the scrupulous observance of all the fasts and feasts, which the church chose to ordain, was an essential part of religion. The spirit of the Reformation led men to throw off a bondage, most hurtful to the interests of society, and most inconsistent with the whole character of the Christian religion, which ranks the distinction of days amongst the rudiments of the law, and declares by the mouth of Paul, that "he that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord, and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it."* Upon the prin-

* Romans xiv. 6.

ciple implied in this declaration, such of the reformers, as wished to depart very far from the corruptions of the church of Rome, abolished those days which from early times had been kept sacred in honour of Christ, as well as those which had been dedicated to the saints; and, as is the case in Scotland, where no day in the year, except the Lord's day, is statedly appropriated to religious service, they retained only the Sabbath, which they considered as of divine institution. It was understood, however, that the church has a power of appointing days occasionally, according to circumstances, for the solemn services of religion, although the annual return of festivals appeared to them to lead to abuse. Such of the reformers, again, as judged it expedient to conform, as far as could be done with safety, to the ancient practice of the church, retained the names of the days sacred to the memory of the apostles, and distinguished with peculiar honour the three great festivals in which the Christian world had long agreed, Christmas, Easter, and Whitsunday. In the church of England, these days are statedly and solemnly observed. Some of the more zealous asserters of the authority which appointed those days attempted, in the seventeenth century, to conciliate greater reverence for the appointment, by placing them upon a level with the Lord's day. They maintained that the change from the seventh to the first day of the week was made, not by divine, but by ecclesiastical authority; they denied the morality of the Sabbath; and they gave the countenance of law to those sports and recreations, after the time of divine service upon that day, which had been usual upon the multiplicity of festivals in the times of Popery.

The controversy concerning the morality of the Sabbath, in which the Puritans and the violent Episcopalians of the seventeenth century eagerly opposed one another, has long since terminated in those rational views which are now generally entertained. That a seventh part of our time should be kept holy to God, appears to be an express positive appointment of our Creator. On what day of the week that seventh part should fall, is a matter of indifference. But the consent of the Christian world, and many other circumstances, conspire in shewing that the change from the last to the first day of the week was

made by apostolical authority: and in this respect the Sabbath is clearly distinguished from all the days, which the laws of the church may either statedly or occasionally set apart for the exercises of religion. As to the manner of keeping the Sabbath holy, that significant expression of our Lord, "The Sabbath was made for man,"* and the general principles which he unfolded, as he occasionally touched upon the subject, may preserve his disciples at once from Jewish or Puritanical strictness, and from those levities which party spirit in the seventeenth century enacted by a law. The same principles apply to those days upon which ecclesiastical authority enjoins the performance of particular services. There may be much expediency and edification in such appointments: they are matters of order, which must be regulated by the powers that are; and any person who wantonly pours contempt upon them, or who obstinately refuses to observe them, knows very little of the spirit of the Gospel, and has much need to examine his own heart.

But the principles, upon which obedience to the *potestas διαταχτικη* ought to proceed, will be more fully unfolded in considering the second object of ecclesiastical canons or regulations.

The Christian society having been founded for this purpose, amongst others, that the members may join in worshipping one God and Father of all, through one Lord Jesus Christ, many of the regulations enacted by the church respect the conduct of divine worship. The Father, indeed, requires from all a worship in spirit and in truth. It were impious to raise up new objects of worship; and Christians are not warranted to make any alteration upon the substance of the two sacraments, or to place any human institution upon a level with them. This would be what the apostle, Col. ii. 23, calls ἐθελοθρησκεια, will-worship, that is, worship of our own framing, which all Protestants agree in disclaiming. Still, in the manner of performing that worship, which is the most strictly agreeable to the genius and character of the Gospel, there are circumstances which the wisdom of God has left to be regulated by human authority. These circumstances respect the

* Mark ii. 27.

decency and solemnity which ought to be maintained in public worship, both for the credit of religion in the eyes of strangers, and also for the purpose of cherishing and preserving a becoming reverence in the minds of the worshippers. There is no man whose conceptions of spiritual objects are at all times so refined, as to be wholly independent of that which is external; and with regard to the generality, there is much danger that if the different parts of the worship prescribed by the Gospel were to be performed in a slovenly and irreverent manner, no small portion of the contempt incident to the outward action would be transferred to religion itself.

All those circumstances, which do not make any essential addition to the worship of God, which respect merely the manner of its being conducted, and which are intended to maintain the credit of religion, and to excite the devotion of the worshippers by the solemnity of the outward action, are known by the name of rites and ceremonies; and it is understood by all Protestant churches, with the exception only of a few sects, that rites and ceremonies fall under the *potestas διαταχτικη*.

If the Apostles of Jesus had established, by their authority, a precise formulary of rites and ceremonies, binding upon Christians in all ages, it would follow that succeeding office-bearers had no occasion and no warrant to exercise this branch of the *potestas διαταχτικη*; and that it was incumbent upon Christians to follow, without alteration, the rule prescribed to them. Such a formulary might perhaps be extracted out of a book entitled, The Apostolical Constitutions, in which the names of the apostles are prefixed to very particular rules and directions about Christian worship. But the most learned inquirers into Christian antiquity are decidedly of opinion, that this is one of the many spurious books which ignorance and zeal produced in the very first ages of the church; "the work," as Mosheim says, "of some austere and melancholy author, who, having taken it into his head to reform the Christian worship, made no scruple to prefix to his rules the names of the apostles, that thus they might be more speedily and favourably received."* The only regulations, therefore,

* Mosh. Eccl. Hist. Cent. I. Part. II. chap. ii.

concerning rites and ceremonies, which we have any reason to ascribe to the apostles, are those which we find in their epistles: and the following observations cannot fail to occur to any person who considers them. Some of the directions, which Paul gives to the Corinthians concerning the worship of God in their assemblies, have a manifest reference to the abundance with which extraordinary gifts of the Spirit were then poured forth, and to the abuses which that abundance occasioned; and they apply only by analogy to other states of the church. Other directions of his were dictated by the manners of those times, which have now given place to very different manners. He intimates that some of the regulations which he prescribes did not proceed from the Spirit of God, but were his own judgment, given by him "as one that had obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful." He concludes the particular directions which occupy 1 Cor. xiv. with these words, "Let all things be done decently, and in order;" and he writes to Titus, "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting." Laying all these things together, we thus reason. As the apostle, from his own judgment, gave such directions in external matters as the circumstances of his times seemed to him to require; as he committed to the church at Corinth a discretionary power with regard to such matters, by desiring them to "do all things decently, and in order;" and as he charged one minister whom he ordained, to supply what he had left deficient, it is a part of the duty of the office-bearers of the church in succeeding ages —a duty which does not require inspiration, which is included in their ordinary commission, and to which they are fully competent—to make such regulations with regard to the like matters, as to them appears expedient.

This inference, which the writings of the apostles seem fairly to warrant, is agreeable to the whole genius of the Gospel. It requires what is, in the highest sense of that phrase, "reasonable service." It does not, with regard to any branch of morality, prescribe what is called "bodily exercise;" but, inspiring those generous sentiments which are in every possible situation the principles of good conduct, it leaves a Christian, in the expression of these sentiments, the full liberty that belongs to an accountable

agent. We hold that no particular form of church government is so precisely marked down in Scripture, as to render any other unlawful. There are general rules to which all that bear office in the church of Christ are required to conform, whatever be their names or their distinctions of rank. But these rules admit of that variety in the forms of church government, by which the religion of Jesus is qualified to receive the countenance and protection of all the possible forms which civil government can assume. In like manner we assert that that liberty with regard to rites, which we have inferred from the writings of the apostles, is most agreeable to the character of our universal religion; for the ideas and usages of men differ widely in different countries, and in different states of society. Immersion at baptism, which was commonly practised where Christianity was first published, would, in our northern climates, be inconvenient or dangerous. The posture of reclining on couches, in which the apostles received the bread and wine from Jesus at the institution of the Lord's Supper, not being used by Europeans upon ordinary occasions, is laid aside at that solemn service. The vestures of the ministers of religion, which in one country are thought decent, might, upon many accounts, appear unsuitable in another; and ceremonies, which at their first appointment had a salutary effect, may by accident, abuse, or change of manners, require to be altered or repealed.

It corresponds then with that wisdom which pervades the whole dispensation of the Gospel, and with the character of a religion fitted for all ages and for all climates, that there should be in the church an authority to regulate, that is, to accommodate to circumstances, so as may best promote the purposes of edification, those ceremonies and rites which from their nature are changeable. Such an authority is not inconsistent with the sovereign authority of the Lord Jesus; because it does not presume to alter any thing which he appointed. It admits that reading the Scriptures, prayer, and praise, are unchangeable parts of Christian worship; that the administration of the sacraments ought to be agreeable to the institution of Christ; and that no authority committed to the church can either omit or add any thing essential. It professes

only to regulate those things which may be varied, without touching what is substantial; and in the canons enacted for this purpose, far from invading the prerogative of Christ, it professes to follow out directions which he left by his apostles, and to exercise the authority created by these directions in the manner which is most agreeable to him, because most conducive to the ends for which the directions are given.—Neither is this authority inconsistent with the liberties of Christians; because, being exercised purely for the sake of decency and order, it does not profess to alter the nature of those objects about which it is conversant, so as to fetter the conscience. The ceremonies are chosen, because they appear fit for the purpose; and the authority by which they are ordained creates an obligation to observe them; but no such holiness or worthiness is annexed to them, as to render them indispensable to the worship of God. If a person is placed in such a situation, that it is physically impossible for him to obey the ecclesiastical canons which ordain the ceremonies, or that he cannot yield this obedience without much inconvenience, and the neglect of some higher duty, he will be accepted by offering that worship "in spirit and in truth," which his Lord prescribes. If he accounts the ceremonies sinful, this judgment, however erroneous it may be, yet if it is deliberately formed after the best consideration which he can bestow, will justify him for neglecting the ceremonies, and will render it his duty to abstain from them. Even while in obedience to the authority by which they are ordained he uniformly observes them "for conscience sake;" if his mind be well informed, he will continue to regard them as in their own nature indifferent, *i. e.* as matters which the law of God has not determined to be either good or evil, which, from views of expediency, have been made the subject of human regulations, but which, from the same views, may be laid aside.

In order to perceive how that authority of enacting ceremonies with which the church is invested, and the correspondent duty of observing them are consistent with the liberties of Christians, it is necessary to form a distinct idea of what is called liberty of conscience. Liberty of conscience, as the word implies, has its seat in the mind. Its essence consists in freedom of judgment, not in freedom

of practice. If Christians are required to believe, as doctrines of God, any propositions which his word has not taught, or to receive as commandments of God what his word has not prescribed, their liberty of conscience is invaded. But if their judgment is left free, their practice may, without any sacrifice of their liberty, be restrained by different considerations. The writings of Paul furnish several examples of the restraint of Christian practice without any invasion of Christian liberty; and the best way in which I can illustrate the distinction is by directing your attention to these examples.

Paul teaches that no kind of meat is of itself unclean, and that the distinction of meats, known under the law of Moses, is abolished by the Gospel.* And he mentions it as one branch of that corruption of the Gospel, which was to arise in the latter days, that men should command "to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them who believe and know the truth."† Yet because many Christians converted from Judaism retained those prejudices as to the distinction of meats, which they had learned from the law; because it would have been sinful in them to eat the kind of meat which they thought unlawful; and because they would have been offended, and might have been led into sin, by imitating their Christian brethren in eating that meat, the apostle declares his resolution to abstain from what, in his own judgment, was lawful, and he exhorts Christians to follow him. "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. Let us follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another." Here is liberty of conscience remaining entire; yet practice restrained by Christian charity. Another example, furnished by the writings of Paul, has relation to Christians converted from heathenism. In the heathen sacrifices, a part of the animal being offered upon the altar of a god, the remainder was consumed by the worshippers at a feast in honour of that god, where he was supposed to be present, and where the worshippers conceived themselves

* Rom. xiv. 14—21. † 1 Tim. iv. 1, 3.

to be partakers with him. Hence a doubt arose among the Christian converts, whether, if they were invited to a feast, and the meat set before them was that which had been offered to an idol, they might lawfully eat of it; or whether the partaking of this meat did not imply upon their part, as it did upon the part of the heathen worshippers, an acknowledgment of the idol, and a testimony of reverence. The apostle decides the matter in respect of the conscience of Christians, by saying, "we know that an idol is nothing in the world," and consequently that meat is neither the better nor the worse for having been offered to an idol.* But, in respect of the practice of Christians, he says, that as every man had not that knowledge, as some still believed that an idol is something, and notwithstanding that belief might be emboldened to eat by the liberty of him who had knowledge, Christians, for the sake of the consciences of others, ought to refrain from doing what their own conscience would permit them to do. "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient; all things edify not." † The New Testament, moreover, furnishes an instance in which the liberty of practice with regard to the distinction of meats, and the eating of things offered to idols, which, in certain circumstances, should have been restrained by Christian charity, was also restrained by authority. The council of apostles and elders mentioned in Acts xv. sent this mandate to the uncircumcised Christians in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia, "That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood." Paul was one of the bearers of this mandate, and we are told, that in passing through these countries, he delivered it to the churches to keep. Yet at that very time he was arguing in his epistles, that in respect of conscience, Christians are at liberty to eat every kind of meat. His doctrine asserted that freedom of judgment in which liberty of conscience consists: the decree in which he concurred, and of which he was the bearer, enjoined that restraint upon practice, which circumstances rendered expedient, in those very things which to the judgment appeared free. Nay, liberty of conscience is asserted in the same decree, which restrained the prac-

* 1 Cor. viii. 4—13. † 1 Cor. x. 23.

tice of Christians in matters indifferent. For the decree declares that the apostles had given no commandment to those teachers, who said to Christians, Ye must be circumcised. Here then is apostolical authority, issuing by the same decree, a declaration of liberty of conscience, and an injunction as to practice; and we find the conduct of the apostle Paul corresponding most accurately to the spirit, both of the declaration and of the injunction. At the very time that he was carrying the decree to the churches, he circumcised Timothy, whose father was a Greek, and whose mother was a Jewess.* He did it because of the Jews who dwelt in those parts; considering that Timothy would be a more useful minister of the Gospel amongst them, and more likely to overcome their antipathy to the faith of Christ, when it appeared that neither he nor the apostle, from whom he had received the knowledge of the Gospel, had any objection to his acknowledging his hereditary connexion with the Mosaic dispensation. But when certain Judaizing teachers, who wished to bring Christians into bondage to the ceremonies of the law, would have compelled Paul to circumcise Titus, who was a Greek, he did not yield subjection to them, "no, not for an hour."† In a matter of indifference, he had voluntarily accommodated himself to the prejudices of the Jews: but when an attempt was made to impose that matter of indifference as a matter of conscience, he asserted the liberty of Christians; and thus by these two parts of his conduct, considered as a commentary upon the apostolical decree, he has set an example to the Christian world of the distinction which ought always to be maintained, between liberty of judgment and liberty of practice.

The principles, which may be educed out of the Scripture instances which I have mentioned, apply to all that has ever been known in the Christian church under the name of rites and ceremonies. While they vindicate the lawfulness of this branch of the *potestas διαταχτικη*, they serve also, when fully considered, to establish the rules which ought to be observed in the exercise of it; and they illustrate the foundation and the measure of that obedience which is due to the enactments.

* Acts xvi. 1, 3. † Gal. ii. 3, 4, 5.

The rites and ceremonies of the Christian church, agreeably to the general rules of Scripture, ought to be of such a kind as to promote the order, the decency, and the solemnity of public worship. At the same time they ought not to be numerous, but should preserve that character of simplicity which is inseparable from true dignity, and which accords especially with the spiritual character of the religion of Christ. The apostles often remind Christians, that they are delivered from the ceremonies of the law, which are styled by Peter, "a yoke which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear." * The whole tenor of our Lord's discourses, and of the writings of his apostles, elevates the mind above those superstitious observances in which the Pharisees placed the substance of religion; and, according to the divine saying of Paul, "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." † The nature of this kingdom is forgotten, when frivolous observances are multiplied by human authority; and the complicated expensive pageantry of Roman Catholic worship, together with the still more childish ceremonies which abound in the Eastern or Greek church, appear to deserve the application of that censure which the apostle pronounced, when he represented the attempts made in his days to revive the Mosaic ritual, as a "turning again to weak and beggarly elements." ‡ The multiplicity of external observances is not only an unnecessary burden, to which Jesus did not mean to subject his followers, but it has a tendency to substitute "the rudiments of the world," in place of a worship "in spirit and in truth." While it professes to render the services of religion venerable, and to cherish devotion, it in reality fatigues and absorbs the mind; and it requires such an expense of time and of money, that, like the heathen amidst the pomp of their sacrifices, Christians are in danger of thinking they have fulfilled their duty to God by performing that work, which the ordinance of man had prescribed, and of losing all solicitude to present to the Father of Spirits that homage of the heart, which is the only offering truly valuable in his sight. Further, all

* Acts xv. 10. † Rom. xiv. 17. ‡ Gal. iv. 9.

the Scripture rules and examples suggest, that, in enacting ceremonies, regard should be had to the opinions, the manners, and prejudices of those to whom they are prescribed: that care should be taken never wantonly to give offence; and that those who entertain more enlightened views upon the subject should not despise their weak brethren. Upon the same principle it is obvious, that ceremonies ought not to be lightly changed. In the eyes of most people, those practices appear venerable which have been handed down from remote antiquity. To many the want of those helps, to which they had been accustomed in the exercises of devotion, might prove very hurtful; and frequent changes in the external parts of worship might shake the steadfastness of their faith. The last rule deducible from the Scripture examples is this, that the authority which enacts the ceremonies should clearly explain the light in which they are to be considered, should never employ any expressions, or any means of enforcing them which tend to convey to the people that they are accounted necessary to salvation, and should beware of seeming to teach that the most punctual observance of things, in themselves indifferent, is of equal importance with judgment, mercy, and the love of God.

If there is an authority in the church to enact rites and ceremonies, there must be a correspondent obligation upon Christians to respect that authority; and the same considerations of order, decency, and edification, which establish the existence of the authority, require the obedience of Christians. The more nearly that the manner of exercising this authority approaches to the rules which we have educed out of Scripture, it will the better answer the purpose of the institution, and will be entitled to the more willing obedience. But it must be carefully marked, that the rules, which those who exercise the authority ought to prescribe to themselves, are not the measures of obedience. There is no authority vested in the hands of fallible men, which is, upon all occasions, exercised in the best possible manner. Yet we do not conceive that the subjects of civil government are absolved from their allegiance, merely because they think that the laws prescribed to them might have been enacted with more wisdom. From the peculiar nature of the *potestas διαταχτικη*, there is hardly a pos-

sibility of its being exercised in such a manner as to give entire satisfaction to every understanding. Between the unnecessary multiplication and parade of ceremonies upon one hand, and a hurtful deficiency upon the other,—between the regard which antiquity claims upon one hand, and the consideration due to occasional offence upon the other, the shades are numberless; and were the precise medium always attained by those who have authority, it might, for opposite reasons, be condemned by persons of different habits and views. The rule of peace and order, therefore, with regard to the members of the Christian society, is compliance with the ceremonies which are established by authority, unless they appear to them unlawful. In particular circumstances, they may find it necessary to protest against a multitude of ceremonies which they consider as burdensome, or against any attempt to impose things indifferent as a matter of conscience. But if there is nothing unlawful in the ceremonies that are appointed, they have need to deliberate well whether it is justifiable for such a cause to disturb the peace of society, or whether it is not more agreeable to the quiet, condescending, and accommodating spirit of the Gospel, while, by judging that the things are indifferent, they keep their minds free from bondage, to maintain that conduct which "gives none offence to the church of God."

This last was not the judgment of that description of men known by the name of Puritans, whose opposition to this branch of the *potestas διαταχτικη* forms a large portion of the ecclesiastical history of Britain for above a century, and produced very important effects upon its civil government. Early after the Reformation, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the Puritans objected in general to the lawfulness of imposing ceremonies by authority, as an abridgment of the liberty of Christians in matters not commanded by the word of God: and they objected, in particular, to the vestments appointed to be worn by the clergy in their public ministrations, because having been worn in times of Popery, they had then been abused to superstition and idolatry. They objected also to the lawfulness of using the sign of the cross in baptism, of kneeling at the Lord's supper, and of other observances of the like kind. The objections were answered by asserting the power of

the church in regulating matters indifferent, by stating the prudential considerations which led the church of England to retain some of the popish ceremonies, in the hopes of keeping the Papists within the church; and by declaring, as is done in the preface to the Common Prayer Books, "That no holiness or worthiness was annexed to the garments of the priests; and that while the excessive multitude of ceremonies used in times of Popery was laid aside, some were received for a decent order in the church for which they were first devised, and because they pertained to edification, whereunto all things done in the church ought to be referred." These answers did not remove the objections of the Puritans. The controversy was agitated with much violence during a great part of the seventeenth century. It was the subject of numberless publications, of debates in parliament, and of judicial discussion. The Puritans, not content with argument and petition, employed various methods of inflaming the minds of the people, and made many attempts to obtain their object by faction and commotion. The church, irritated by opposition to her authority, was little disposed to condescend to weak consciences, in points which might have been yielded, and often employed severity to bend those whom she could not convince. It is not my province to enter into a detail of these proceedings, or to compare the conduct of the different parties. I mention them only as furnishing the most interesting occasion, upon which this branch of the *potestas διαταχτικη* was thoroughly canvassed. There probably were faults on both sides; and the reflection, which the whole history of that period suggests to us, is this, that we have much reason to congratulate ourselves upon living in times, when a knowledge of the nature and the measure of church authority is conjoined with a respect for those principles of toleration and condescension, which, although most congenial to the spirit of the Gospel, were, for many ages, little understood by the disciples of Christ.

CHAP. VI.

DISCIPLINE.

THE *potestas διαιρετικη*, that which respects discipline, or the exercise of judgment in inflicting and removing censures, is, like the other two branches, limited and regulated by the sovereign authority of the Lord Jesus, and the liberties of his disciples.

We found, formerly, that this branch of power belongs to the church. Even a voluntary association has an inherent right of removing those who are judged unworthy of remaining; and the church, that society constituted by Jesus Christ, into which it is the duty of his disciples to enter, is invested by its Divine Founder with the right of exercising, by its ministers, the office of admonishing, reproving, suspending, or excluding from the privileges of the society, according to the conduct of the members. In order, however, to perceive in what manner the exercise of the power implied in this office is regulated and limited by the sovereign authority of Christ, and the liberties of his disciples, it is necessary to recollect particularly the words in which the power is conveyed or expressed, and the claims which have been founded upon the interpretation of them.

When our Lord said to Peter, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven," * he seems to have intended to explain this figurative expression, by adding, in the words then addressed to Peter, but afterwards ad-

* Matt. xvi. 19.

dressed to all the Apostles, "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."* After his resurrection, our Lord "breathed on the Apostles, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." † The Apostle Paul, in the exercise of that authority thus given to the Apostles, judged that the incestuous person at Corinth should be "delivered unto Satan;" ‡ and he says of Hymeneus and Alexander, who "concerning faith had made shipwreck, I have delivered them unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme." §

The expressions used in these passages of Scripture occur in the earliest accounts of the discipline exercised by the Christian church: and the practice of the church in primitive times explains the sense in which these expressions were understood. When disciples of Christ, who had dishonoured his religion by committing any gross immorality, or by relapsing into idolatry, were cut off from the church by the sentence of excommunication, they were kept, often for years, in a state of penance, however desirous to be readmitted. They made a public confession of their faith, accompanied with the most humiliating expressions of grief. For some time they stood without the doors, while the Christians were employed in worship. Afterwards they were allowed to enter; then to stand during a part of the service; then to remain during the whole: but they were not permitted to partake of the Lord's Supper, till a formal absolution was pronounced by the church. The time of the penance was sometimes shortened, when the anguish of their mind, or any occasional distress of body, threatened the danger of their dying in that condition, or when those who were then suffering persecution, or other deserving members of the church, interceded for them, and became by this intercession, in some measure, sureties for their future good behaviour. The duration of the penance, the acts required while it continued, and the manner of the absolu-

* Matt. xviii. 18. † John xx. 22, 23.
‡ 1 Cor. v. 3, 4, 5. § 1 Tim. i. 19, 20.

tion, varied at different times. The matter was, from its nature, subject to much abuse; it was often taken under the cognizance of ancient councils; and a great part of their canons was employed in regulating the exercise of discipline.

From a perversion of several parts of the primitive practice, and from a false interpretation of the passages which have been quoted from Scripture, there arose gradually that gross corruption of the *potestas διαχριτικη*, which prevailed in the church of Rome. It came to be understood that the sentence of excommunication, by its own intrinsic authority, condemned to eternal punishment; that the excommunicated person could not be delivered from this condemnation, unless the church gave him absolution; and that the church had the power of absolving him upon the private confession of his fault, either by prescribing to him certain acts of penance and works of charity, the performance of which was considered as a satisfaction for the sin which he had committed, or by applying to him the merits of some other person. And as, in the progress of corruption, the whole power of the church was supposed to be lodged in the Pope, there flowed from him, at his pleasure, indulgences or remissions of some parts of the penance, absolutions, and pardons, the possession of which was represented to Christians as essential to salvation, and the sale of which formed a most gainful traffic.

It is unnecessary to state how opposite this system of the *potestas διαχριτικη* is, both to the sovereign authority of the Lord Jesus, and to the rights of his disciples. Instead of holding them accountable to their Master in heaven, who alone "is able to save and to destroy," it teaches them to depend for salvation upon conforming to the caprice, and gratifying the avarice of men, equally subject to him, and often more corrupt than themselves.

To avoid any approach to this system, one fundamental principle must never be forgotten, that the future and eternal punishment of sin is in the power of God; that none can forgive sins, so as to deliver from that punishment, but God alone; and therefore, that the judgments pronounced by the church can respect only those external

censures and penalties of sin, which it has the power of inflicting, and which, consequently, it has the power of removing. Holding this principle, of which the whole system of religion affords unquestionable assurance, we cannot give a proper interpretation of the passages which I quoted from Scripture, without making a distinction between that branch of the judicial power of the church which is merely declarative, and that which is authoritative. We are taught in Scripture that sin deserves the wrath of God, both in this life and in that which is to come; that every obstinate and impenitent sinner shall certainly endure the everlasting effects of this wrath, but that all who repent and believe in Christ have "redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins;" and thus by faith in him are delivered from the power of Satan, and translated into the kingdom of God. This is the great doctrine of the Gospel, which the church is appointed to publish by the ministry of the word, and which her ministers apply, according to circumstances, to those over whom their office gives them inspection. When, by virtue of that inspection, they are called to attend to the transgressions of a particular person, the general doctrine is applied to warn him of the danger of sin; and when he becomes ashamed of his conduct, it is applied to compose his mind with the hope of forgiveness. This application may be accommodated to his temper and situation, with a prudence that renders it more useful to him than any general discourse; and it claims his attention, because it proceeds, not from an individual, but from those who are set over him in the Lord, and who speak in the name of their master, from whom they derive a commission to make this application. They may be mistaken in judging of the sincerity of his repentance; for although it is possible that the gift of discerning spirits, with which the Apostles were endowed, might enable them to know whether a person, who had sinned, was qualified by the state of his mind to receive forgiveness from God, and so might direct them infallibly in retaining and remitting sins, yet, as no such gift now exists in the church, succeeding office-bearers may often retain the sins which God is ready to forgive, and remit those which he sees cause to condemn. But as the office of the church, in

regard to the future and eternal consequences of sin, is merely declarative, no evil can arise from the fallibility of those by whom that office is exercised. They only publish a general truth: they call the person to whom the publication is specially addressed, to examine himself how far he is concerned in that truth; and they leave the determination of his final condition to God who knows his heart.

But there is another branch of the judicial power of the church which is authoritative, in which those, by whom the power is exercised, act, strictly speaking, as judges, pronouncing a sentence, the effects of which operate in virtue of their right to judge. To understand the manner in which our Lord has expressed this authoritative power, you will observe, that "the kingdom of heaven," the keys of which he gave to Peter, and, as Protestants believe, to the other apostles also, does not in the passage referred to, mean that state of glory for which Christians are prepared by the discipline of this life; but, according to a phraseology often used by our Lord, it denotes the dispensation of the Gospel, that spiritual economy which he has established, his church, the great society of which he is the head. You will find "the keys of the kingdom of heaven" commonly divided in theological books into two, the key of doctrine and the key of discipline. This is the very distinction which I am now making, between the declarative and the authoritative power of the church. By the key of doctrine, the office-bearers interpret, declare, and apply the truth; by the key of discipline, they have the power of admitting into the church and excluding from it. In reference to this figure of the keys, there is added by our Lord, in explication, the other figurative expression of "binding and loosing." For, as he who has the keys of a prison is invested with the office of imprisoning or releasing from prison, so those who have "the keys of the kingdom of heaven," *i. e.* the power of admitting into the church and excluding from it, are invested with a judicial office, in the exercise of which their sentences bind upon men their sins, so that they are prevented from entering into the church, or loose them from their sins, so that they find admission. The bodily act of binding is put for that sentence of condemning, which, after his resurrection, our Lord expressed by "retaining sin;"

the bodily act of loosing for that sentence of absolving, which he then expressed by "remitting sins." The phrase, "delivering unto Satan," has, in like manner, a reference to admission into the church. For the Gospel represents the existence of two opposite kingdoms; one in which Christ is king; the other in which Satan reigns. Persons at their baptism renounced Satan; there was αποταξις Σατανα; συνταξις Χριστῳ. When they were excluded from the church, they returned, were sent back to that kingdom of Satan, out of which at their baptism they had been translated.

The administration of baptism to grown persons supposes, on their part, previous instruction, and submits the judgment of their qualifications to those by whom they are baptized. Infant-baptism is indeed administered indiscriminately; but there is a subsequent act, either confirmation, as in the church of England, or, as with us, admission for the first time to the Lord's supper, by which those who had been baptized are, at the age of discretion, formally received into the church, so that their qualifications also are submitted to the judgment of the office-bearers. We saw, formerly, that the same persons, who are invested with the office of admitting into the church, are also invested with the office of excluding from it. The two offices, which we naturally expect to be conjoined, make up what is meant by the key of discipline or jurisdiction; and as Jesus says, "I give this key," the two offices are a legitimate part of the constitution of his church, the exercise of which, far from being any invasion of his sovereignty, is an act of obedience to him, and a fulfilment of his purposes. He has left directions to the persons employed in these offices, for the due observance of which they are accountable to him; and when they conform to his directions, the acts performed by them in the exercise of these offices are his acts, which, being done in his name, and by his authority, will receive his sanction. But there is no promise of infallibility to those to whom the offices are committed. They are called to exercise their own judgment in applying general directions to particular cases. They may wilfully, or from some corrupt motive, pronounce an unjust sentence; or, with the best intentions, they may be mistaken. It is impossi-

ble that Jesus can give his sanction to any sentence pronounced in opposition to his own directions; and, therefore, with respect to him, such a sentence is the same as if it had not been pronounced. His subjects may, indeed, suffer by sentences, excluding those who ought to be admitted, or admitting those who ought to be excluded. But this is an inconvenience of the same kind with those, which always must result from power being lodged in the hands of fallible men. It does not affect the final salvation of any, because that depends entirely upon the judgment of God; and even with regard to those external privileges which may be unjustly withheld, or improperly communicated, the inconvenience is not altogether without remedy. For, as Jesus can compensate by his grace for the want of those external privileges, which are only the means of conveying grace, so there are cases of necessity, in which Christians are justified in departing from the established order of the church, and in resorting to an extraordinary method of enjoying that comfort and edification, of which they are deprived by the tyranny or gross abuse of its office-bearers.

Having thus seen that the *potestas διαχριτικη*, when rightly understood, is not inconsistent either with the sovereign authority of Christ or with the liberties of his disciples, it may be observed, in general, that it must be of equal extent with the other two branches of the power of the church; that is, that the censures and penalties must somehow be applicable in all the cases which come under the *potestas δογματικη* and the *potestas διαταχτικη*. For, if any case were totally withdrawn from the *potestas διαχριτικη*, the power of the church would in that case be nugatory; because, being left without defence, it might be despised with impunity. Yet the nature of things may require a very great difference in the mode of exercising the *potestas διαχριτικη* upon different occasions; and there may arise, from principles already explained, limitations and regulations of that power which all Christians, who "know what manner of spirit they are of," will not fail to observe.*

* For the application of the principles mentioned above, to the different objects about which the *potestas διαχριτικη* is conversant,

and for the account of our national church, which the plan of the Lectures embraces, the reader is referred either to the author's View of the Constitution of the Church of Scotland, or to his Theological Institutes. The last work also contains the conclusion of the Lectures, viz. Observations on the different parts of the Office of a Parish Minister, and Counsels respecting the manner of performing them properly.—Ed.

INDEX OF MATTERS.

Adoption, meaning of, as applied to Christians, ii. 361.

Allegory, examples of, in Scripture, i. 126; use of, 388; interpretation of, 389.

Anabaptists, why so called, ii. 393.

Antinomianism, separation of Calvinistic system from, ii. 332.

Apollinaris, heresy of, i. 502; condemned by the council of Constantinople, 504.

Apostles, character of the, as drawn in their own writings, a branch of the internal evidence of Christianity, i. 34; testimony of the, credible, 54; situation of, subsequent to death of Christ foretold by him, 145; inspiration of, 225.

Arianism, fundamental principle of, i. 340.

Arians regard Jesus Christ as the most exalted of creatures, i. 486; chargeable with idolatry, *ibid.*; their defence, 487; examined, 489; modern, maintain the Apollinarian system, 502; deny that the Son is ὁμοούσιος with the Father, 540.

Arius, opinion of, respecting the Son, i. 340; condemned by the council of Nice, *ibid.*; meaning of the terms in which the condemnation of the council was expressed, 539.

Arminians, system of the, respecting the fall as bringing mortality upon man, ii. 12; does not exhaust the meaning of Scripture, 14; hold universal redemption, 165; that contingent events may be foreknown, 182; an antecedent will in God to save all men, 184; and a consequent will, 185; difficulties attending their doctrine, 203; wherein they agree with the Calvinists, 208; differ from them as to the nature and efficacy of divine grace, 210; their view of it, 211; not agreeable to fact, 218; resolves the salvation of men into something independent of divine grace, 222; supposes a failure of the purpose of God, 225; their answer to objections to their system the same that Calvinists give to objections to theirs, 255; five articles of, condemned by the synod of Dort, 292.

Arminius, history of, 290.

Assurance of grace and salvation, an object of knowledge, ii. 324; not essential to faith, 326.

Athanasian system respecting Christ, i. 493; respecting the Trinity, 543.

Atheism, absurdities of, exposed, i. 6.

Atonement, doctrine of the, ii. 54; objections made to, 55; not irrational or unjust, 57; shown

from the character of God as lawgiver, 59; the substitution of Jesus Christ in the place of sinners, 64; the acceptance of the lawgiver, 66; and the consent of the substitute, *ibid.*; sacrifices among the heathen, 76; sin-offerings under the law of Moses, 86; typical of the sacrifice of Christ, 94; argument from the analogy between the Mosaic and Christian dispensations, 96; and from the language and views of Scripture, 107.

Authenticity of the books of the New Testament, definition of the, i. 17; evidence of, *ibid.*

Baptism, general practice of, ii. 382; how made a distinguishing rite to Christians, 383; instruction connected with, 384; perpetual obligation of, mode of administering, 386; a federal act, 391; of infants, 393.

Being of God, principles upon which it is inferred, i. 3.

Calling, difference between external and effectual, ii. 304.

Calvin, Institutes of, characterized, i. 327; history of, ii. 288.

Calvinism, history of, ii. 283; derived from Scripture, *ibid.*; Augustine, 285; Godeschalcus, 286; Luther, 287; Calvin, 288; Knox, 289; articles of the church of England, 290; Synod of Dort, 291; political events bring Calvinisim into disrepute in England, 293; Westminster Confession of Faith, 294: Jansenists, 297; lessons suggested by the history of Calvinism, 298; rules for reading upon it, 299; its alliance with philosophy, 300; its opposition to the Synergistical system, 305; and to fanaticism, 306; its view of faith, 312; and of justification, 320; its separation from Antinomianism, 320.

Calvinists, system of, respecting the fall, as corrupting human nature, ii. 15; grounds upon which it rests, *ibid.*; their great principle, the will of the Supreme Being, the cause of every thing, 185; extent of the divine decree the foundation of their doctrines of predestination, 188; condition of the human race a part of this decree, 190; statement of their doctrine of predestination, 192: difficulties attending it, 203; wherein they agree with Arminians, 208; great principle on which they differ from them, 213; influence of that principle on their views of divine grace, *ibid.*; hold the perseverance of the saints, 215; their idea of the liberty of moral agents, 232; and of its consistency with the efficacy of divine grace, 240; reply to the charge that according to their system God is partial, 245; and unjust, 246; the glory of God the great end of all things, 256; support which Scripture gives to their system, 260; by comprehending all the actions of men in the plan of providence, 261; mentioning a predestination of individuals arising from the good pleasure of God, 264; and describing the change of character which divine grace effects, 274; their answer to the objection drawn from the commands and expos-

tulations of Scripture, 276; distinguish between external and effectual calling, 304; oppose both the Synergistical system and fanaticism, 305; their view of faith, 312; justification as one act of God peculiar to the elect, 321; the Lord's Supper, 412.

Casuistry, Christian, examples of, ii. 345; questions of, how resolved, 346.

Ceremonial law, emblematical of the Gospel dispensation, ii. 91.

Ceremonies, appointment of, belongs to the church, ii. 544; proper nature of, in the Christian church, 553; obligation to observe, 554.

Cerinthus, heresy of, i. 372. 500.

Christ, character of, a branch of the internal evidence of Christianity, i. 32; miracles of, 47; illustration of his character, 86; his prophecies, 136; his resurrection, an evidence of his religion, 180; number of those who saw him after he rose from the dead, 181; why he did not appear to all the people, 182; different kinds of evidence to us of the truth of his resurrection, 183; opinions concerning his person, 335; proofs of his pre-existence, 351; meaning of his title, the Son of God, 361; creation ascribed to him, 365; why called the Word, 368; administration of providence ascribed to him, 408; divine appearances recorded in the Old Testament examined, 410; made by Christ, 420; he is the author of a new dispensation, 422; was worshipped in the temple, 426; appeared to the patriarchs, and gave the law, 430; Socinian objections answered, 434; Arian objections, 439; intimations of his divinity given during his life; 447; ascription to him of the name of God, 462; of his attributes, 477; of his worship, 482; both God and man, 495; his miraculous conception, 507; atonement by him, ii. 54; his sufferings vicarious, 71; their value, 108; always described as a punishment for sin, 111; his merits, 139; typified by the High Priest of the Jews, 144; significantly called the Mediator between God and man, 146; his offices as Mediator, 370; the only Mediator, 372; his intercession, 374.

Christianity, truth of, supported by history, i. 15; internal evidence of, 26; what that evidence consists of, 29; external evidence of, 39; miracles, 40; illustration of both kinds of evidence, 78; prophecy, 103; progress of, before the destruction of Jerusalem, 161; propagation of, subsequent to that event, 193; peculiar doctrines of, 251; importance of, 275; as a republication of the religion of nature, 276; as the religion of sinners, 285; rejection of, attended with positive guilt, 290; difficulties belonging to, not a solid objection to it, 300; designed to be the religion of the whole human race, ii. 148; why to be first preached to the Jews, 151; limited by the terms in which it is offered, 155; publication of, attended with benefit to all men, 169, 279.

Church government, foundation of, ii. 420; power implied in, not created by the state, 495; spiritual, 499; subordinate to the

authority of Christ, 511; designed for edification, 514; how limited, 517.
Conception, miraculous, of the Saviour, i. 507; gives completeness to the revelation concerning him, 508.
Confessions of Faith, origin of, ii. 528; objections to, 531; answered, 532.
Conscience, liberty of, explained, ii. 547; consistent with restraint of practice, 548.
Consubstantiation, the doctrine of the Lutherans, ii. 406.
Controversies in religion accounted for, i. 314; principles to be followed in judging of them, 323; which are the chief, 329.
Conversion, meaning of, ii. 305; extremes to be avoided concerning manner of, *ibid.*
Conversion of the Apostle Paul, argument for the truth of Christianity from, i. 212.
Corruption of human nature, whence derived, ii. 15; what is understood by it, 18; manner in which it is transmitted cannot be known, 21.
Covenant, with Adam, ii. 29; of redemption, 202; Sinaitic, 365; Abrahamic, *ibid.*; how only two covenants, 367; why the second called of grace, *ibid.*; how it is said to have conditions, 368; fitness of its having a Mediator, 369; its seals, 376.
Creation ascribed to Jesus Christ, i. 365.

Death, the consequence of Adam's transgression, ii. 13.
Death, spiritual, nature of, ii. 19. 140.
Decree of God, what embraced by, ii. 189.
Discipline, mode of exercising, in early times, ii. 558; foundation of the right of the church to exercise, 559.
Docetæ, who so called, i. 339, 500.
Doctrines, peculiar, of Christianity, i. 251; men, sinners, 252; result of Adam's first transgression, *ibid.*; God's displeasure with sin, 254; his plan of salvation, 255; executed by Jesus Christ, 256; applied by the Spirit, 260; his influence upon men, 261; faith, 262; Christian character, 267; means of grace, 269; marks of a Christian church, 272.
Dort, Synod of, ii. 291, 530.

Ebionites, opinions of the, i. 338.
Election, statement of the doctrine of, ii. 193.
Episcopacy, grounds upon which it rests, ii. 470; practice of the Apostles, 472; and of the church in general, 473; grounds of, investigated, 474.
Erastianism, original meaning of, ii. 495; modern meaning of, 498; fallacy of, 503.
Evidence of Christianity, collateral, i. 15; internal, 26; external, 39; miracles, 40; prophecy, 103; predictions delivered by Jesus Christ, 136; his resurrection, 180; propagation of his religion, 193; evidence to be examined, 306.
Eutyches, heresy of, i. 505; condemned by the council of Chalcedon, 506.
Excommunication, effects of, ii. 508.

Faith, nature and origin of, i. 263; not the procuring cause of salvation, 265; not the only thing required of a Christian, *ibid.*; Calvinistic view of, ii. 312;

different kinds of, 313; saving faith, 314; distinction between direct and reflex act of, 325; good works the evidences of, 330.

Fall of Adam, history of the, how to be understood, ii. 4; opinions respecting its effects, 10; of Pelagius, that it did not injure his nature, or extend to his posterity, 11; of Arminius, that it has brought death upon them, 12; of Calvinists, that human nature is corrupted by it, 15; what is meant by this corruption, 18; impossible to know how it is transmitted, 21; the sin of Adam imputed to his posterity, 22; reasoning in support of this imputation, 23.

Fanaticism, character of, ii. 308; line of distinction between it and Calvinism, 309; opposition of Scripture to, 311.

Fathers, Christian, estimate of their writings, i. 323.

Festivals, observance of, in the church, ii. 541.

Forgiveness, promise of, not contained in the religion of nature, i. 286; connected with the death of Christ, ii. 124.

Generation of the Son, i. 545, 548.

Genuineness of the books of the New Testament, definition of, i. 17; evidence of, *ibid.*

Gnostics, tenets of the, respecting the Christ, i. 339; foundation of the system of, 371; whom they considered the Maker of the world, 383; held the Spirit to be an Æon inferior to Christ, 525.

God, being of, i. 2; principles upon which it is inferred, 3; moral government of, 7; traces of it in the constitution of human nature, 8; and in the state of the world, 10; the Supreme Lawgiver, ii. 59; acts in this character in punishing and forgiving sins, 61; distinction between secret and revealed will of, 280.

Good works not the ground of our acceptance with God, i. 266; whence they should arise, *ibid.*; evidences of faith, ii. 330; in what sense, necessary to salvation, 331; not possessed of merit, 348.

Government, moral, of God, i. 7; traces of, in the constitution of the human mind, 8; and in the state of the world, 10; nature and perfection of, ii. 61.

Grace, meaning of the term, ii. 209; Arminian view of it, 210; that its efficacy depends on the reception given to it, 211; and that it may be resisted, *ibid.*; Calvinistic view of it, as confined to the elect, and effectual, 213; seldom exerted without means, 214; partakers of it cannot fall finally or totally, 215; not subversive of the liberty of moral agents, 240; efficacy of, does not supersede exhortations and commands, 276.

Guilt, meaning of the term, ii. 62; followed by punishment, *ibid.*

Hebrews, Epistle to the, explained, ii. 95; represents the sacrifices under the law as figures of the sacrifice on the cross, 98.

Hell-torments, eternity of, ii. 419.

High-priest of the Jews a type of Christ, ii. 144.

Holy Ghost, opinions concerning the, i. 520; information respecting the, 521; personality

and divinity of the, denied by Macedonius, 526; and by the Socinians, 527; grounds upon which these doctrines are to be maintained, 530; why called the earnest of our inheritance, ii. 145.

Hypostatical union, meaning of, i. 509; explains much of the language of Scripture concerning Christ, *ibid.*; qualifies him to be the Saviour of the world, 517.

Imputation of the sin of Adam, doctrine of the, ii. 22; defended, 23.

Incarnation of Christ, importance of the doctrine, i. 508.

Independents, leading principles of the, ii. 432; have not authority of Scripture for their form of church government, 436; disunion of the Christian society which they cause, 437.

Infant-baptism, arguments for, ii. 394.

Inspiration of the apostles, i. 225; opinions respecting, 226; degrees of, 228; evidence of, 229; necessary for the purposes of their mission, *ibid.*; promised, 233; claimed by the apostles, 237; reception of their claim, 243; their writings not inconsistent with the notion of their being inspired, 244; objections to, *ibid.*; kind of inspiration considered necessary for them, 245.

Intercession of Christ, nature of, ii. 374.

Intermediate state, ii. 418.

Israel, children of, purpose for which they were raised up, ii. 150.

Jacobites, the same as the Monophysites, i. 506.

Jerusalem, destruction of, i. 146; subsequent history of, 170.

Jesus, SEE Christ.

Justice, vindictive, or punitive, an attribute of God, as Ruler of the universe, ii. 63; illustration of, 110.

Justification ascribed to the efficacy of the blood of Christ, ii. 126; nature of, 316; a forensic act, *ibid.*; errors of the church of Rome respecting, 317; Socinian view of, 318; Arminian, 319; Calvinistic, *ibid.*; act of, not to be confounded with the decree of election, 320; whether a first and second, *ibid.*; of believers under the Old Testament, 321; of those to whom neither the law nor the gospel has been published, 323; connexion of, with sanctification, 327.

Latitudinarians, who so called, ii. 295.

Law of Moses, connexion between, and the Gospel, ii. 150.

Liberty of conscience, explained, ii. 547; consistent with restraint of practice, 548.

Liberty of moral agents, Arminian view of, ii. 230; Calvinistic, 232; shewn to be consistent with the efficacy of divine grace, 240.

Life eternal, opinions respecting, ii. 133; foundation of the hope of, 135; not merely an acquittal from the sentence of death, 137; implies communion with God, 140; confirmed by the resurrection of Christ, 142; and by his exaltation, 143.

Lord's Supper, obligation of the, ii. 399; correspondence between, and the passover, 400; exhibits the death of Christ as a sacrifice, 401; different views

of the, 402; by the church of Rome, 403; Lutherans, 406; Socinians and others, 409; Calvinists, 412; frequency of observing, 415.

Lutherans, opinion of, respecting predestination, ii. 288; and the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper, 406.

Macedonius denied the divinity of the Holy Ghost, i. 526; opinion of, condemned by the council of Constantinople, 527.

Mahomet, success of, accounted for, i. 196; contrast between his success and the progress of Christianity, 200.

Manicheism, its account of the origin of evil, ii. 250.

Mediator, meaning of, as applied to Christ, ii. 369; offices arising from his being, 370; when he acted in the character of, *ibid.*; he the only, 372, 375.

Melancthon, opinions of, ii. 288.

Merits of Christ, meaning of the term, ii. 139; imputed to believers, *ibid.*

Ministry, standing, agreeable to Scripture, ii. 428; purpose of, 525.

Miracles, force of the argument from, i. 40; capable of proof, 51; testimony borne to the miracles of Jesus Christ credible, 54; its credibility not impaired by distance of time, 58; no opposite testimony, 61; difference between the Christian miracles, and alleged miracles, 64; Abbé Paris, 67; miracles ascribed to the agency of evil spirits, 68; uncertainty as to the duration of miraculous powers, 72; philological objections to the Scripture miracles, and answers to them, 89.

Monophysites hold that there is but one nature in Christ, i. 506.

Monothelites ascribe two natures to Christ, but only one will, i. 506.

Moral agents, liberty of, defined, ii. 230, 232; determinations of, directed by motives, 233; influence of divine grace in regard to these motives, 240.

Moral evil, opinions respecting the origin of, ii. 249; insufficiency of all attempts to explain it, 251; fundamental principles in regard to it, 253.

Moral law, immutability of the, ii. 87, 343; precepts of the Gospel the interpretation of the, 344.

Mosaic dispensation, three divisions of, ii. 87; moral, permanent, *ibid.*; political and ceremonial, temporary, 88; ceremonial, emblematical of the Gospel dispensation, 91; connexion of, with the Gospel, 150.

Mystery, Scripture meaning of, i. 29.

Natural religion not originally defective, i. 276; circumstances which made a republication of it desirable, 278; religious state of the heathen world, 279; excellence of the Gospel as a republication of the religion of nature, 282.

Nestorius, heresy of, i. 505; condemned by the council of Ephesus, *ibid.*

Nicene creed, when and for what purpose formed, i. 526; its terms explained, 539.

Obedience of Christ, active and passive, ii. 138.

Original sin, SEE corruption of human nature.

Papists, distinction between, and Roman Catholics, ii. 442.
Patropassians, to whom the name of, applied, i. 538.
Paul, apostle, argument from conversion of, i. 212; James and he consistent in their doctrine of faith, ii. 330.
Pelagians consider the fall as not having impaired the nature of man, ii. 11; system of, very far short of the views of Scripture, 12; hold universal redemption, 165.
Pentateuch, Samaritan, origin of, i. 107.
Pentecost, what it was, i. 189.
Perseverance of the saints, ii. 215; necessarily results from the Calvinistic system, 324; meaning of, 356.
Personality of the Spirit, i. 530.
Peter, apostle, primacy of, examined, ii. 450; whether bishop of Rome, 455,
Prayer, duty of, ii. 373; encouragement to, 374.
Preaching, directions for, ii. 334.
Predestination, opinions concerning, ii. 175; not admitted by Socinus, 176; his idea of the divine foreknowledge not adopted by all Socinians, 181; Arminian view of, 182; Calvinistic, 185; systems of, compared, 195; difficulties of the Arminian, 203; of the Calvinistic, *ibid.*; ascribed in Scripture to the good pleasure of God, 264.
Presbyterians hold that Timothy and Titus were extraordinary office-bearers, ii. 475; ἐπίσκοποι and πρεσβύτεροι are used promiscuously in Scripture, 478; the proof of a succession of bishops is defective, 480; the same form of church government was not everywhere fixed by the Apostles, 483; the origin of Episcopacy may be traced in the circumstances of the church, 486; the ministers of the Gospel are equal, 491.
Procession of the Spirit, i. 545, 550.
Propagation of Christianity, i. 193; sources of information respecting the fact, 194; argument which it affords for the truth of Christianity, 195; causes of it assigned by Mr. Gibbon, 205; objections to the argument from the propagation of Christianity, and answers to them, 214.
Prophecies of the Old Testament, two great divisions of the, i. 136; both classes of, connected, 137.
Prophecies respecting the papacy, explained, ii. 457.
Prophecies uttered by Jesus Christ, clearness, extent, and importance of, 139; advantages to the evidence of Christianity from the study of, 140; specimens of, respecting his death, 141; resurrection, 142; gift of the Holy Ghost, 143; the situation and behaviour of his apostles, 145; the destruction of Jerusalem, 146; the progress of Christianity previous to that event, 161; the condition of the Jewish nation subsequent to it, 167; the final discrimination of the righteous and the wicked, 178.
Prophecy, facts on which the argument from rests, i. 104; prophetical writings existed before the events said to have fulfilled them, 106; predictions of the time and place of the Messiah's birth, compared with facts recorded, 118; ob-

jections to the argument from prophecy, 121; direct prophecies of the Messiah, *ibid.*; double sense of prophecy, 123; not inconsistent with the nature of prophecy, 125; or the general use of language, 126; difference between the quotations in the New Testament, and the passages referred to in the Old, 128; argument from prophecy stated, 131; quotations in which there is merely an accommodation of words, *ibid.*; the prophets divinely inspired, 132; mutual support of prophecy and miracles, 134.

Providence, administration of, ascribed to Jesus Christ, i. 408; all the actions of men comprehended in the plan of, ii. 261.

Punishment, the consequence of guilt, ii. 64; vicarious, instances of, 67; sufferings of Christ, a peculiar instance of, 71.

Quakers reject baptism, ii. 385; and the Lord's Supper, 401; deny the usefulness and lawfulness of a standing ministry, 426.

Reason, use of, in religion, i. 304; to examine the evidences of revelation, 306; to learn what are the truths revealed, 307; to defend them, 309; humbly to receive what is found to be revealed, 311.

Redemption, import of the term, ii. 121; employed to denote eternal life, 141; whether universal or particular, 164; arguments in favour of particular, 168.

Reconciliation, an effect of the death of Christ, ii. 117; the foundation of the hope of eternal life, 135.

Reformed churches, as opposed to Lutherans, ii. 288.

Regeneration, ii. 305; whether an immediate effect of baptism, 390.

Remonstrants, who so called, ii. 291.

Repentance, nature of, ii. 337; errors of the Church of Rome respecting, 338; late repentance, 340.

Reprobation, meaning of, ii. 194. answer to statement that decree of, imposes a necessity of sinning, 246.

Resurrection of Christ, foretold by himself, i. 142; evidence of, 181; number of witnesses, *ibid.*; traditionary evidence, 183; clear testimony of the apostles, 184; extraordinary powers with which they were endowed, 187.

Rites, appointment of, belongs to the church, ii. 544; proper nature of, in the Christian church, 553; obligation to observe, 554.

Rome, church of, errors of, respecting justification, ii. 317; repentance, 338; good works, 346; distinction of, between mortal and venial sins, 352; *Limbus patrum*, 371; *mediatores secundarii*, 375; doctrine of, concerning the sacraments, 378; baptism, 389; transubstantiation, 403; purgatory, 418; different views of, concerning the power of the pope, 443; unity of the church, 446; primacy of Peter, 450; Peter bishop of Rome, 455; the popes his successors, 456; application of prophecy to the church of Rome, 457; dangerous claims of, 503; doctrine

of, respecting the Scriptures, 518; corruption of, in regard to discipline, 559.

Sabbath, obligation of the, ii. 542.
Sabellius denied a distinction of persons in the Trinity, i. 537; his followers named Patropassians, 538.
Sacraments, meaning of the term, ii. 377; doctrine of the church of Rome respecting, 378; of Socinians, 379; of Protestants in general, *ibid.*; proper idea of a sacrament, 380.
Sacrifices, universally offered, ii. 75; original of, uncertain, *ibid.*; facts bearing on this subject few, 76; idea of substitution of the victim for the offerer understood by the heathen, *ibid.*; and expressed in their language, 78; substitution divinely appointed in the Jewish sacrifices, 81; true notion of the Jewish sin-offerings, 86; analogy from them in favour of the substitution of Christ, 87.
Salvation, term, employed to denote eternal life, ii. 141.
Sanctification, connexion of, with justification, ii. 327; nature of, 337; not complete in this life, 351; grounds upon which this doctrine rests, 353; its connexion with perseverance of the saints and assurance of salvation, 356; sanctification progressive, 357.
Satisfaction of Christ, meaning of the term, ii. 65; SEE Atonement.
Scripture, inspiration of, i. 225; language and views of, as bearing on the doctrine of the atonement, ii. 107; support given by, to the Calvinistic system, 260; the only rule of faith, 520.
Semi-Arians hold that the Son has a likeness to the Father, i. 542.
Semi-Pelagians, tenets of the, ii. 222; hold the Synergistical system, 305; that sanctification may be complete in this life, 351.
Septuagint, translation, when made, i. 109.
Sin, introduction of, ii. 4; a violation of law, 59.
Sin-offerings, true notion of, under the law of Moses, ii. 86; typical of the sacrifice of Christ, 94.
Socinians deny inspiration of the Apostles, i. 226; consider reason the supreme judge of religion, 305; hold the simple humanity of Christ, 338; style themselves Unitarians, *ibid.*; their system of interpreting Scripture, 386; shewn to be indefensible, 390; disclaim the worship of Christ, 491; grounds upon which they do so examined, *ibid.*; deny personality of the Spirit, 528; maintain that the consequences of Adam's sin do not extend to his posterity, ii. 11; that forgiveness of sins is freely bestowed on all who repent, 35; that Christ has merely published this forgiveness, 36; and acted as a teacher, 37; confirming his doctrines by his death, 38; and giving by his resurrection assurance of reward to the obedient, 39; insuperable difficulties of their system, 43; their doctrine of justification, 318; of the sacraments, 379; views of baptism, 385; of the Lord's Supper, 409; of the office of teaching, 521.
Socinus held that Christ ought to be worshipped, i. 490; that

the Holy Ghost is the power and energy of God, 528; that there cannot be predestination, ii. 175.
Spirit, Holy, SEE Holy Ghost.
Sublapsarians, ii. 191.
Sufferings of Christ, value of the, i. 518, ii. 108; always described as a punishment for sin, 111; their effects, 117.
Supererogation, works of, impossibility of, ii. 349.
Supralapsarians, ii. 191.
Systems of Divinity compared, i. 336.

Targums, what they are, i. 113.
Testament, New, books of, authentic, i. 17; genuine, 20; various readings of, 21; how to be corrected, 22; philological objections to truths of, 89; how to be answered, 91; inspiration of, 225; close connexion of with the Old Testament, 445.
Theodotus, opinion of, respecting our Lord, i. 338.
Transubstantiation, monstrous absurdity of, ii. 403.
Trent, Council of, ii. 297.
Trinity, doctrine of the, i. 533; grounds upon which it rests, 536; Sabellian heresy, 537; Arian, 538; tenets of Athanasius, 543; the Father, the fountain of Deity, 544; generation of the Son, 548; procession of the Spirit, 550; the three persons inseparably joined together, 552; amount of the knowledge which Scripture gives of the Trinity, 562; advices suggested in consequence, 563.

Unbelief, guilt of, i. 290.

Wicked, speculations concerning the final state of the, ii. 158.
Word, origin of the term, as applied to Jesus Christ, i. 368.
Works, SEE Good Works.

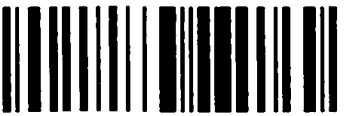
Texts and Passages of Scripture on which particular observations are made in the Lectures.

	Vol.	Page
Genesis III.	ii.	4
Exodus III. 14.	i.	412
Psalm CIV. 7.	—	398
Prov. VIII.	—	377
Isaiah LIII.	ii.	107
Daniel VII.	—	459
Matt. XIII. 11.	i.	297
—— XVI. 16, 17, 18.	ii.	452
—— XXII. 41—46.	i.	457
—— XXIV.	—	146
Mark II. 1—4.	—	93
Luke I. 1—4.	—	238
John I. 1—18.	—	366
—— —— 15.	—	352
John I. 30.	i.	352
—— II. 1—11.	—	95
—— III. 13.	—	354
—— —— 31.	—	353
—— V. 17.	—	455
—— —— 37, 38.	—	453
—— VI. 62.	—	357
—— VIII. 58.	—	358
—— X. 34—38.	—	456
—— XI.	i.	79
—— XII. 41.	—	429
—— XVII. 5.	—	359
—— XX. 28.	—	460
Acts XIII. 48.	ii.	273

	Vol.	Page
Acts XX. 28.	i.	468
Romans III. 19—31.	ii.	126
——— V. 11—19.	—	25
——— VIII. 28—33.	—	273
——— IX. 5.	i.	469
1 Cor. XII. 8, 9, 10.	—	190
2 Cor. V. 21.	ii.	116, 121
Galat. III. 10—13.	—	———
Ephes. IV. 11, 12, 13.	—	431
Philipp. II. 6, 7, 8.	i.	496
Coloss. I. 15—18.	—	379
——— — 19, 20.	ii.	117
2 Thess. II.	ii.	457
1 Tim. III. 16.	i.	473
Hebrews I.	—	393
——— II. 14, 16.	—	498
——— VIII. 3, 4.	ii.	106
——— — 5.	—	98
——— IX. 9—14.	—	———
——— — 21—24.	—	99
——— X. 11—18.	—	———
——— XIII. 7, 17.	—	430
1 John V. 7.	i.	435
——— — 20.	—	476

THE END.

Edinburgh: Printed by A. Balfour and Co. Niddry Street.


00067999

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 02 January, 2016